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RAMANATHAPURAM - AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL GUIDE

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R. TIRUMALA

Ramanathapuram District

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL GUIDE

By

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PREFACE

This book owes its origin to a suggestion in 1978, by Mr. S. Narayanan, who was then Collector of Ramanathapuram District. He told us that there was need for a guide to the history and archaeology of the district, which abounds in places of historical and religious interest. He followed up his suggestion with a liberal grant. This has made the publication of this book possible.

Mr. S. Subrahmaniam, the present collector actively supported the publication. It should be emphasised that this book is confined to the history and archaeology of the district. The reader is referred to the district gazeteer for details regarding its agriculture, industry, geography and the like. The book was written before the premature demise of the Raja of Ramnad, Sri Ramanatha Sethupathi, in April, 1979. He took keen interest in this work, and it would altogether have been fitting if he could have read it. But he has been snatched away from our midst. The Sethupathies are as honoured family in Tamil history and it is appropriate that this book should draw the attention to its greatness. Thanks are due to Mr. R. Ramachandran, of Madurai, who took some of the photographs and the French Institute of Indology, Pondicherry, which supplied many of the others.

Some of the photographs were taken by Thiru. M. Chandramoorti, Registering Officer, State Archaeology Dept. Madurai. Thiru. V. Vedachalam, Curator, Madurai Museum, helped in preparing notes on places of interest. The

blocks were made by Messers Ajanta Process, Madras. This is only a modest beginning, to focus attention on the antiquity of important places and to give a general history of the region. It is hoped that this would stimulate further research for a comprehensive understanding of the region.

R. Nagaswamy
N. S. Ramaswami

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Ramanathapuram district is notable as the home of the martial Maravas and for its great temple of Ramanatha. Historically, it has been the gateway to Sri Lanka, hardly twenty miles away by sea. It has also been the home of the Sethupathis, a dynasty which, though reduced to zamindars under the British, had been distinguished rulers. The Sethupathis were the guardians of the Sethu, the bridge which Sri Rama is said to have built to Sri Lanka. Their connection with the Ramanatha temple is still strong today. Another historic family connected with the district was that of Sivaganga. The Tondaimans of Pudukottai were also closely connected with it.

One of the seven coastal districts of Tamil Nadu, Ramanathapuram is bounded by the Palk Straits to its east and by the Gulf of Mannar to its south. The island of Rameswaram stands roughly midway between the straits and the gulf. Created in 1910 with parts of the old Madurai and Tirunelveli districts, Ramanathapuram comprises nine taluks. They are, in the north and adjoining Tiruchirapalli district, Tirupattur; to its east Tiruvadanai; to the south Sivaganga, Paramakudi, Mudukulathur and Ramanathapuram, the last two washed by the Gulf of Mannar; and to the west Aruppukottai, Sattur and Srivilliputtur. The last named taluk adjoins Kerala to its west. Thus, the district extends from the Bay of Bengal in the east to the Western Ghats in the west.

The sixth largest district in Tamilnadu, Ramanathapuram covers an area of over 12,500 square kilometres or about

4,900 square miles. Its population, according to the 1971 census, was over 28,50,000. Only about 6,00,000 persons live in urban areas; the vast majority are villagers. While there are thirty-five towns, the villages number over 1,600.

Physically, the district comprises four regions. The coastal area of Ramanathapuram, Mudukulathur and Tiruvadanai taluks is sandy. Chettinad, consisting of Tirupattur and the northern parts of Sivaganga and Tiruvadanai, is a red soil region. The eastern slopes of the Western Ghats occur in parts of Srivilliputtur. The rest of the district, Sattur, Aruppukottai, and Paramakudi, and parts of Sivaganga, Mudukulathur, Ramanathapuram and Tiruvadanai, is a plain. In addition to Rameswaram island, there are sixteen others off the district coast. Kurusadi, one of the biggest, contains a fisheries research station.

The district has a long seacoast, nearly 170 miles long. Pamban, Tondi and Kizhakkarai are the main ports. Dhanushkodi, on Rameswaram island, was washed away in a great cyclone in 1964. Rameswaram and Devipatnam are sub-ports. Many spots on the coast are associated with Sri Rama's journey to Sri Lanka, chiefy Uppur, Devipatnam, and Dhanushkodi. As elsewhere in the country, a number of fishermen's villages stand on the coast.

The main river that flows through the district is the Vaigai. Rising in the Western Ghats, it runs through Madurai district (and it has historic associations with that great city) before entering Ramanathapuram district near Tirupuvanam, in Sivaganga taluk. It flows in a south-easterly direction across Sivaganga, Paramakudi and Ramanathapuram taluks before joining the sea near Attangarai. Nearly a hundred channels take off from it in this district and irrigate over 1,00,000 acres in the five taluks of Sivaganga, Paramakudi, Mudukulathur, Tiruvadanai and Ramanathapuram. There are

a few other rivers and rivulets. These mainly supply the innumerable tanks in the district, of which, according to an official report for 1960-61, there were 3,824. The biggest is the Ramanathapuram Big Tank, into which the Vaigai empties itself and which has eight irrigation sources with a total ayacut of 4,500 acres.

The economy of the district is, as elsewhere in the State and the country, mainly agricultural. According to the census of 1971, 63.5 per cent of the total working population was cultivators and agricultural labourers. The total "geographical area" in the district is over 3,00,000 acres, and of this 74.2 per cent is under crops. The soils of the district are mainly black sand and red sand.

Generally hot and dry most of the year, except in the coastal area, where the sea breeze is a tempering influence, the district receives most of its rainfall from the north-east monsoon. The upper slopes of the Srivilliputtur hills, however, benefit from both monsoons. As a rule, the rainfall is meagre and irregular. Failure of the monsoon in one season is frequently followed by excessive rains in the next.

Paddy is the main food crop. The area under it was, according to the census of 1960-61, 37.2 per cent of the total area sown. Kambu, varagu, ragi and the chilli followed. The principal commercial crops are cotton and groundnut.

The people are mainly Hindu with a strength of 21.33 lakhs out of a total population of 24.21 lakhs, according to the census of 1961. Islam is the second largest, with 1.56 lakhs and Christianity the third, with 1.30 lakhs.

Among the Hindus, the Kallars are numerically the most important. The Maravars and they are the earliest inhabitants of the district. The Agamudaiyars have close

affinities with the Maravars. The Nadars are also an important community. The Balija is a sub-group of the Nayudus, living mainly in Srivilliputtur and Sattur. The Nattukottai Chettiars are well known for their commercial enterprise. All these communities speak Tamil which, of course, is the predominant language of the district.

Among the Telugu speakers, who are an important linguistic group, the Tottiyars or the Kambalathar form a leading section. The Rajus, mainly living in Rajapalayam, are an enterprising community. The Kaikolars are scattered throughout the district, but in some concentration in Paramakudi taluk. The Devangas, living mainly in Aruppukottai, are weavers. The Reddiars, an agricultural class speaking Telugu, have a reputation as farmers. The Saurashtras, to be found mainly in Paramakudi and Ramanathapuram, are 'skilful and industrious workmen'.

Of the scheduled castes, found in all the taluks of the district, the leading groups are the Pallars, the Parayas and the Chakkiliars. The district's population includes a nomadic hill tribe called the Paliyans.

The Muslims, the second biggest community in the district, belong to one or the other of four groups, the Labbai, the Syed, the Sheikh and the Pathan. The Labbais, also known as Marakayars or Ravuthars, are skilled traders and mariners.

Among the Christians, the next biggest religious group, the Catholics are the major community. De Britto, an early missionary, suffered martyrdom in the seventeenth century.

Historically the most interesting communications system in the district pertains to the pilgrim route to Rameswaram. Until the advent of the railways, pilgrims, many from far distances, travelled in groups, staying the night at the choult-

ries built by philanthropic kings and nobles. They usually followed a route prescribed and sanctified by custom.

The first railway line to cross the district was opened on the first day of 1876. Though there are some important railway junctions like Virudhunagar, there are further possibilities of railway expansion.

CHAPTER II

EARLY HISTORY

It is possible to trace the history of the district from pre-historic times. The palaeolithic man lived there. The evidence is the quartzite instruments which have been discovered in the district and the ridges of quartyose metamorphic rock in the coastal areas. Next to palaeolithic tools, microlithic tools occur in Mandiyar and Kariyapatti. Recently the Tamilnadu Department of Archaeology noticed some flakes and cores of Microlithic tools on the banks of the Veerasuzhi in Thudduppur, near Devakkottai. The tools are associated with quartz rock materials and pebbles. A Neolithic stone tool (mace head) was discovered from Manamadurai. A second Neolithic object of great interest found in the district was a flake saw of chert, which lay in a bed of chert gravel on the banks of the Palar in Tirupattur. The saw edge of the thick backed flake is formed by seven distinct notches, having been broken into the harp side of the triangular piece of brown chert found in 1882. Megalithic monuments, mostly urn burials, have been noticed in Pudupatti in Aruppukkottai taluk and on the border of the Ramanathapuram and Madurai districts.

At the dawn of history the district formed part of the Marava country which then included not only Pudukkottai but also areas now in Tirunelveli, Madurai and Tiruchi districts. What the Sangam classics like "Purananuru" and "Silappadhikaram" say of the Maravas is that they were a warlike people. They lived in "Palai", or desert land, one of the five categories the Sangam works demarcate.

The district was part of the ancient Pandyan kingdom. No incident particularly connecting the region with the

history of the early Pandyas, reckoned from "Palyagasalai" Mudukudumi to Ugraperuvaludi and Ugra Pandya, can be referred to Ramanathapuram district. It must be assumed that it lived its life in common with the rest of the country.

Nor are there any events to record during the Kalabhra interregnum. Redemption from that hated rule by Kadungon heralded the three centuries of what has been called the first Pandyan empire. This period was a time of general prosperity, but it was not free from war's alarms. The Sinhalese occupation of the district by Lankapura Dandanayaka in the twelfth century is a well known interlude, but there was another in the ninth century.

Srimara Srivallabha, who won a great victory over an alliance of south Indian enemies in a battle in Kudamukku, or Kumbakonam, invaded Sri Lanka and conquered a part of it. The national chronicle of the island, the "Mahavamsa", states that the Pandya won a complete victory in a battle fought in Mahatitta and "the army of king Pandu spread destruction all over the island". This war was but an aspect of the almost perpetual hostility between the kings of the mainland and of the island dating back from the days of Elara in the third century B.C.

After making Lanka "of no value whatsoever", the Pandya made peace with Sena I, the island's king. But in the reign of the next Sinhalese monarch there was a counter invasion. Sena II allied himself with a pretender to the Pandya throne and attacked the mainland. The "Mahavamsa" claims that he was successful, capturing Madurai itself. Ramanathapuram, lying as it did in the path of the contending armies, must have borne the brunt of the fighting.

A new phase in the history of the district, as a part of the larger kingdom, opened when Parantaka I, the Chola, con-

quered Madurai from Rajasimha II, the last of the first Pandyan emperors, who was aided by Kassapa V, the Lanka monarch. The Chola occupation of the Pandya kingdom lasted from about 925 to the beginning of the thirteenth century. But the Chola sovereignty was seldom unchallenged during this long period. "The country seems to have been in a state of chronic revolt". The Cholas must have attached particular importance to their control of Ramanathapuram district because it was the gateway to Lanka which was under their rule for many decades and with the kings of which they were fighting on most other occasions. It would not be far-fetched to suppose that at least some squadrons of the Chola navies which conquered south-east Asia in the eleventh century set out from Ramanathapuram ports.

But early in the Chola conquest the occupying power suffered a setback in its own country. In 949 the Rashtrakuta, Krishna III, defeated Rajaditya, the Chola Crown Prince and heir of Parantaka I, at the battle of Takkolam, and the Chola empire was virtually destroyed. The victor claims to have marched upto Rameswaram and planted a pillar of victory in addition to building two temples. His army must have passed through Ramanathapuram district.

It was not until the great Rajaraja I came to the throne in 985 that the Cholas recovered. The process of recovery before this was chequered. Sundara Chola Parantaka II (957-973) was prominent in this effort, and he twice defeated Vira Pandya. Many epigraphs referring to this Pandya are found in the district.

Though the masterful Rajaraja I and his mighty son, Rajendra I, completely conquered the Pandya land and annexed parts of Lanka, they and their successors had always to be fighting to assert their rule. The dispossessed Pandya and the

Sinhala banded together. As long as Chola power was at its zenith, they could do little. But their vengeance came in signal fashion in the thirteenth century. Meanwhile, inscriptions of some of the Pandyas who would not submit are to be found in the district.

Those of Jatavarman Srivallabha and Vira Pandya do not read like the records of princes living in obscurity or fear. They refer to the development of irrigation sources and to a grain measure named "Vira".

Another Kannada king tried conclusions with the Cholas. Vishnuvardhana I, the founder of the Hoysala kingdom in the twelfth century, claims to have marched to Rameswaram. But that was only a temporary setback for the Cholas. The Hoysalas could establish themselves only near Tiruchi and farther north.

In 1170 began a well documented episode which profoundly affected Ramanathapuram district. The evidence comes from both sides to a civil war which broke out in the Pandyan kingdom, the "Mahavamsa" and Chola epigraphs. Two princes, Parakrama Pandya and Kulasekhara, claimed the throne. When the latter began hostilities, the former appealed for help to the king of Lanka, who bore the same name, Parakramabahu called the Great. The Sinhala sent an army to the mainland to help Parakrama, but before it arrived Kulasekhara captured his rival and put him to death along with some members of his family. He then crowned himself.

The Sinhalese general was Lankapura. According to the "Mahavamsa", he landed in Talabbilla. This seems to have been the place now called Puliadisalai, a few miles east of Gandhamadhana Parvatha and near Rameswaram temple itself. Some historians connect with this invasion the fact that, according to an inscription in the temple, Parakramabahu built the sanctum.

Lankapura attacked and captured Rameswaram island. He marched on Pamban and took Kundugula, now named Kundugal. Meanwhile, Kulasekhara, who had set up camp in Vedalai, a place near Mandapam, on the mainland, attacked him, but was worsted. From Vedalai Lankapura marched on Devipatnam and, after taking it, went on to Siruvayal, Anivalakkottai and Nettur, the last named near Ilayangudi. Anivalakkottai and Nettur served as Lankapura's bases of operations.

In Nettur the Sinhala general learnt that a son of the murdered Parakrama Pandya was alive and in hiding. He sought him out and asked him to join him in the Marava country. From this stage Lankapura acted as if under Vira Pandya's orders, though, of course, the Pandya was a dependant at this stage.

Lankapura's successes continued. He captured Manamadurai, Anjukkottai (near Tiruvadanai), Tondi, Pasipattinam, Kuruntunkudi, and, finally, Semponmari. The invader seems to have set up a regular administration in the region from Rameswaram to Tiruppattur. He cultivated the arts of peace too, for he had two tanks, Rajasingamangalam and Valugrama, repaired.

Kulasekhara did not give up the fight He gathered a big army and appeared in the Marava country. But he had now to face two Lanka armies, Parakramabahu having sent another general, Jagadvijaya, to aid Lankapura. The latter attacked Kulasekhara and defeated him in the battle of Mangalam, a place some nine miles from Kalaiyarkoil. Extending his arms to Siruvayal, he won a few more victories and then returned to Kalaiyarkoil. Soon after, in association with Jagadvijaya, he forced a battle on Kulasekhara and defeated him. He then placed Vira Pandya on the Madurai throne. Soon after he went in pursuit of Kulasekhara who was said to

be hiding in Tirupattur. Marching on that town, he made Kulasekhara's followers flee and advanced on Ponnamaravathi. In this town he set the buildings of Kulasekhara's followers on fire. Returning to Madurai, he performed the formal celebration of Vira Pandya's coronation.

All this is what the Lanka chronicle says. It is often onesided. For, despite the innumerable defeats Kulasekhara allegedly suffered, he kept the field and was by no means exterminated. The "Mahavamsa's" evidence is contradicted by what the Chola epigraphs say. Kulasekhara seems to have asked for the assistance of Rajadhiraja II, the contemporary Chola, with some reluctance or, at any rate, only at a late stage. But the "Mahavamsa" makes light even of the Chola intervention. It asserts that it did not affect the issue and that Kulasekhara was defeated in many more battles. At last Lankapura was 'satisfied' that he had rid the country of the enemy and, before going back to Lanka, he made over the kingdom to Vira Pandya and ordered that the *Kahapana* coin bearing the superscription of king Parakrama i.e. Parakramabahu should be used throughout the country.

Chola evidence denies this tale of uninterrupted success for the invaders. The Arpakkam inscription of Rajadhiraja II asserts that they were, in fact, finally defeated. It mentions a miracle. "The army of Ceylon, having taken possession of the Pandya country, drove away king Kulasekhara, who was in Madura, and then began to fight in battle the feudatories of the great king Sri Rajadhiraja. The danger consequent upon the war spreading to the districts of Tondi and Pasi, combined with the (easy) way in which the army of Ceylon gained victories, struck terror into (the hearts of) people both in the Chola country and in other districts". At this time one Edirili Chola Sambuvarayan, evidently a progenitor of the dynasty which was to rule northern Tondaimandalam for a while immediately before the advent of Vijayanagar power in Tamil

Nadu, felt concern for his son who had gone to fight the Sinhalese invaders at the head of the Chola army. He requested Swamideva, a holy man, to pray for divine intercession against the Sinhalese.

Swamideva said, "This the army of Ceylon, which consists of very wicked and vicious men, removed the sacred door of the temple of the god at holy Rameswaram, obstructed the worship and carried away all the treasures of the temple. We also learn that they are all sinners against Siva. We shall make the necessary attempts for their flight and disappearance after being completety defeated and after being chased away". The inscription continues, "Accordingly, he was pleased to worship (Siva) for twenty-eight days continually. Subsequently messengers arrived from my (that is, Edirili Chola Sambuvarayan's) son, Pallavarayar, bringing a letter (to me) reporting that Jayadratha Dandanayaka and Lankapura Dandanayaka and the other generals and the troops fled, having been defeated".

Another inscription of Rajadhiraja, dated three years later, states less picturesquely, but more realistically, "When the king of Ceylon sent his army and generals to conquer and annex the Pandya country, the Pandya king Kulasekhara fled from his kingdom and sought refuge with the Chola and entreated him to recover his kingdom for him. Thereupon the latter was pleased to direct that Kulasekhara be reinstated on his throne after killing the Ceylonese commander and his lieutenants who had entered the Pandya country and nailing up their heads over the gates of Madura. In accordance with the direction of the Chola king, Kulasekharadeva, during his stay in the Chola country, was entertained with deserving liberality. With enough forces, fund and zeal, the Pandya country was reconquered by the Cholas, Lankapura Dandanayaka and his generals being put to death and their heads nailed on to the gateway of Madura. Arrangements were then made for the

entry of Kulasekharadeva into Madura after taking necessary precautions against the future annexation of the Pandya country to Ilam (Lanka)". These exploits were perfomed by Pallavarayar, the Chola minister. He was the builder of a fine temple in a village still bearing his name, near Mayuram.

A third Chola inscription, dated four years after the second and found in North Arcot, carries the story further, though it is much damaged. Recording a gift of land to one Palaiyanur Udaiyan Vedavanam Udaiyan Ammaiyappan, also named Annan Pallavarayan, it recounts his services to the Chola State. Repeating the story of Lankapura's invasion and its repulse on the lines of the earlier record, it mentions a Chola counter-invasion of Lanka. Annan Pallavarayan, learning that Parakramabahu, the Sinhalese king, was preparing another invasion of the Pandya country by concentrating his forces and building ships in places like Uratturai, Pulaicceri, Matottam, Vallikamam, and Mattival, despatched an expedition to the island. It was led by Srivallabha, a nephew of Parakramabahn who, having been kept out of his rights, was living on the mainland.

The expedition was successful. It destroyed several places in Lanka, including Pulaicceri and Matottam, where Parakramabahu had been concentrating his forces. "It seized many elephants and set fire to a considerable area extending over twenty *kadams* from east to west and seventy *kadams* from north to south, killing some of the Sinhalese chieftains of the locality and taking others captive. The booty captured in the course of the expedition was then duly presented to the Chola king by Annan Pallavarayan who thus successfully counteracted all the machinations of the Ceylonese ruler".

This, however, was not the end of the episode. The former enemies changed sides. Kulasekhara went over to Parakramabahu, and the Cholas supported Vira Pandya. Possibly

Parakramabahu had realised that helping Vira Pandya would endanger his own throne. He now recognised Kulasekhara as the Pandya king and sent him presents. A Chola inscription says indignantly that Kulasekhara, lost to all claims of gratitude to his Chola benefactor, entered into an alliance with the Sinhalese, drove away beyond the Vellaru the Marava "Samantas", or commanders, who were in Chola service, such as Rajaraja Karkudi Maraya and Rajaghambhira Anjukottai Nadalvan. Kulasekhara also removed from the Madurai gates the heads of the executed Sinhala generals.

The treachery came to light when the Cholas intercepted letters and presents sent by Parakramabahu to Kulasekhara' s supporters. Thereupon Rajadhiraja ordered Annan Pallavarayan to expel Kulasekhara and reinstate Vira Pandya. Pallavarayan accomplished this (incidentally to be rewarded with a land gift). But Kulasekhara did not go down without a fight. A Chola inscription, of the sixth year of Kulothunga III, the successor of Rajadhiraja II, states that, owing to disturbances in the area, the images of a temple had to be taken to another for safety in 1177. Evidently, Kulasekhara and his Sinhalese supporters made an expedition into the heart of the Chola country, for the inscription is found in Sempanarkoil, in Tanjore district.

The episode did not end even with the reinstatement of Vira Pandya. The Pandya, who ought to have been grateful to the Chola for his throne, now threw in his lot with the Sinhalese. "The fact was that the traditional alliance among the southern powers, Venad, Pandya and Ceylons against the Chola monarch was too firmly established to be shaken by considerations of gratitude for help received at a critical juncture. Hence it was that both Kulasekhara and Vira Pandya, though they were ready to seek Chola assistance against each other, could not maintain that friendship after their object was attained, and drifted into the diplomatic

situation normal to the ruler of the Pandya kingdom". As for the Sinhalese king, his "policy was consistent; he aligned himself with any prince who was prepared to go to war against the Cholas, but these princes were time-servers who changed sides according to their estimates of their own immediate interests".

According to the inscriptions Kulothunga III, who had succeeded to the throne in the meantime, the Chola despatched an army to aid Vikrama Pandya, the successor of Kulasekhara, who had sought his help. It destroyed Vira Pandya's son (or sons) and defeated the Marava army ("marappadai"). The Sinhala soldiers had their noses cut off, and they "rushed into the sea". Vikrama was placed on the Madurai throne, Vira Pandya having been compelled to flee.

It is necessary to trace the details, however briefly, of these invasions and counter-invasions in a history of Ramanathapuram district because, in addition to the references to the Maravas in the inscriptions, the region must have been the cockpit of the war, geographically situated as it was between the Chola empire and Lanka.

An epigraph in Chidambaram states of Kulothunga III that "by a single army" he "had the nose of the son of Vira Pandya cut off before he was captured". He also "bestowed on Vikrama Pandya the great city of Kudal (Madurai). After this he took the crowned head of Vira Pandya who had returned to the attack because of the disgrace (of his former defeat), and erected a pillar of victory at the end of the fight".

Despite all this, Vira Pandya was still persistent. Though in Lanka Parakramabahu the Great had died and was succeeded by a nephew who was a poet and was murdered by a noble who ruled only for five days and was followed by Nissankamalla who is associated with some constructions in the Rameswaram temple, he made another attempt on the throne. But he was

defeated in a battle in Nettur. This finally settled Vira Pandya's fate. He sought refuge with the Venad king in Kollam, or Quilon, but the latter refused the dangerous honour. Both surrendered to Kulothunga. Vira Pandya seems to have been pensioned off.

But the Cholas had not yet done with the Pandyas. Kulothunga resolved to "wear the crown of heroism" in Madurai; in plain language, to celebrate a "virabhisheka". His opponent must have been Jatavarman Kulasekhara, who might have succeeded Vikrama, once a protege of the Cholas. During this campaign, says a Chola epigraph, Kulothunga captured Madurai, drove away the Pandya and his family, demolished his hall of coronation, made captives of the "Marappadai" and the "Elagap-padai". (The former expression refers to the Marava troops who must have been mainly levied in Ramanathapuram district). He also cut off the noses of the Pandya soldiers.

While he bestowed splendid gifts on the Minakshi Sundareswara temple in Madurai, covering it with gold "so that it resembled a golden mountain", and while he exhibited exemplary humility by standing in the street as an ordinary citizen and worshipping the Lord as he passed by in procession, Kulothunga was extraordinarily vindictive towards the vanquished Pandya, though he did restore him to the throne. This vindictiveness was to be avenged in a few decades by the kings of the resurgent Pandya dynasty who repaid the Cholas in the same coin with meticulous asperity.

The Lanka occupation of Ramanathapuram district could have lasted hardly seven or eight years, but it has made its way into the folklore of the people. Many stories, some fantastic, are still current. Some unused stones which were to be found strewn around the Gandamadhana Parvatha until a few decades ago were said to have been meant for buildings Lanka-

pura had decided to erect in Rameswaram island, Kundungula might have been the site of a coastal town which Lankapura built at the command of his king, called Parakramapattinam then and Pudupattinam now. Lanka coins are picked up there now and then.

The next landmark in the history of the Marava country as well as of the Pandyan empire of which it continued to be a part was the invasion by the Muslims under Malik Kafur in 1311. Innumerable epigraphs testify to the Pandyan rule of the region. It was during this period that Marco Polo, the famous Venetian traveller, visited Ma'bar, or the Pandyan kingdom. He returned home in 1295 after his fabulous adventures in the east. What he says of the Pandyan realm is of particular interest, especially as he describes the pearl fishery of the Ramanathapuram coast, which attracted the attention of foreigners from early times.

'Leaving the island of Zeilan (Ceylon or Lanka), and sailing in a westerly direction sixty miles, you reach the great province of Maabar, which is not an island, but a part of the continent of greater India, as it is termed, being the noblest and richest country in the world.

'It is governed by four kings, of whom the principal is named Senper-bandi (Sundara Pandya). Within his dominions is a fishery for pearls, in the gulf of a bay that lies between Maabar and the island of Zeilan, where the water is not more than from ten to twelve fathoms in depth, and in some places not more than two fathoms".

The Venetian then describes "the business of the fishery". A number of merchants "form themselves into separate companies, and employ many vessels and boats of different sizes, well provided with anchors. They engage and carry with them persons who are skilled in the art of diving for the oysters

in which the pearls are enclosed. These they bring up in bags made of netting that are fastened about their bodies, and then repeat the operation, rising to the surface when they can no longer hold their breath. And after a short interval they dive again. The greater proportion of the pearls obtained from the fisheries in this gulf are round and of a good lustre. The spot where the oysters are taken in the greatest number is called Betala, on the shores of the mainland".

So far Polo's acccount is straight-forward. But "I will tell you wonderful things" and a marvel soon appears. "The gulf being infested with a kind of large fish, which often prove destructive to the divers, the merchants take the precaution of being accompanied by certain enchanters belonging to a class of Bramins, who by means of their mystical art, have the power of stupefying these fish so as to prevent them doing mischief. As the fishing takes place in the daytime only, they discontinue the effect in the evening in order that dishonest persons who might be inclined to take the opportunity of diving at night and stealing the oysters may be deterred. The enchanters are likewise skilled in the art of fascinating all kinds of beasts and birds".

The Venetian continues, "The fishery commences in the month of April and lasts till the middle of May. The privilege of engaging in it is farmed of the king, to whom a tenth part only of the produce is allowed. To the magicians they allow a twentieth part, and consequently reserve to themselves a considerable profit. By the time the period above-mentioned is completed the stock of oysters is exhausted, and the vessels are then taken to another place, distant full three hundred miles from this gulf, where they establish themselves in the month of September and remain till the middle of October. Independently of the tenth of the pearls to which the king is entitled, he requires to have the choice of all such as are large and well

shaped; and as he pays liberally for them, the merchants are not disinclined to carry them to him for that purpose".

There follows a long account of the life and manners of the people of Ma'bar. It applies to the people of Ramanathapuram district in the thirteenth century as a general rule.

" The country produces no other grain than rice and sesame", an assertion based on imperfect observation. "Both men and women wash their whole bodies in water twice every day, that is, in the morning and the evening. Until this ablution has taken place they neither eat nor drink, and the person who should neglect this observance would be regarded as a heretic. When they drink, they do not apply the vessel to the mouth, but hold it above the head and pour the liquor into the mouth, not suffering the vessel on any account to touch the lips".

In another passage the traveller says, "The greater part of the idolatrous inhabitants of this kingdom show particular reverence for the ox; and none will from any consideration be induced to eat the flesh of oxen". This was true, but not another observation that "all descriptions of people daub their houses with cowdung".

Polo retails many fairy tales about the king. It appears that he had "at the least five hundred wives and concubines". Further, the king retains about his person many knights who are called "the devoted servants of his majesty in this world and the next. These attend upon his person at court, ride by his side in processions, accompany him on all occasions. Upon the death of the king, and when the ceremony of burning his body takes place, all these devoted servants throw themselves into the same fire and are consumed with the royal corpse, intending by this act to bear him company in another life".

These remarks are tittle tattle, but Polo has some observations of higher import. "In this country there are many adepts in the science denominated physiognomy, which teaches the knowledge of the nature and qualities of men, and whether they tend to good or evil. These qualities are immediately discerned upon the appearance of the man or woman. They also know what events are portended by meeting certain beasts or birds. More attention is paid by these people to the flight of birds than by any others in the world, and from thence they predict good or bad fortune. Every day of the week there is one hour which they regard as unlucky, and this they name 'choiach'; thus, for example, on Monday the canonical hour of 'mi.tierce', on Tuesday the hour of 'tierce', on Wednesday the hour of 'none', and on these hours they do not make purchases nor transact any kind of business, being persuaded that it would not be attended with success. In like manner they ascertain the qualities of every day throughout the year, which are described and noted in their books".

Another passage refers to a custom still followed to some extent. When an infant is born, be it a boy or a girl, the father or the mother makes a memorandum in writing of the day of the week on which the birth took place; also of the age, of the name of the month and the hour. This is done because every future act of their lives is regulated by astrology.

"As soon as a son attains the age of thirteen years, they set him at liberty, and no longer suffer him to be an inmate in his father's house; giving him the amount, in their money, of twenty to twenty-four groats. Thus provided, they consider him capable of gaining his livelihood by engaging in some kind of trade and thence deriving a profit.

"These boys never cease to run about in all directions during the whole course of the day, buying an article in one place and selling it in another. At the season when the pearl

fishery is going on, they frequent the beach and make purchases from the fishermen or others of five, six or more (small) pearls according to their means, carrying them afterwards to their merchants who, on account of the heat of the sun, remain sitting in their houses, and to whom they say, 'These pearls have cost us so much. Pray, allow such a profit on them as you may judge reasonable'. The merchants then give them something beyond the price at which they had been obtained. In this way likewise they deal in many other articles and become excellent and most acute traders. When business is over for the day, they carry to their mothers the provisions necessary for their dinners which they prepare and dress for them. But these never eat anything at their father's expense".

Among the obiter dicta of this traveller should be included the following; "The natives of this part of the country go naked excepting that they cover with a piece of cloth those parts of the body which modesty dictates". "The king is no more clothed than the rest except that he has a piece of richer cloth and is honourably distinguished by various kinds of ornaments". Satis were "much applauded by the community".

The Marava country must have obtained its share of the prosperity which the Pandya land enjoyed under the second empire till about the end of the thirteenth century. But just as in the twelfth century a civil war in Madurai had brought about the Lanka occupation, so in the second decade of the fourteenth a fratricidal struggle led to the incursions of the Muslims. After Maravarman Kulasekhara, in whose reign Marco Polo had made his visit, died in 1311, his legitimate son, Sundara, and an illegitimate son, Vira, both claimed the succession. When Vira defeated his rival and occupied the throne, Sundara appealed for help to Malik Kafur, the general of Allauddin Khilji, the Sultan of Delhi, then on a plundering raid in the south.

Kafur seized his opportunity. He occupied Madurai, Vira Pandya having abandoned it. Then the Muslim army marched across the Marava land to Rameswaram where, or near where, he built a mosque named after Allauddin. "From this time on the history of the Pandyas becomes the story of a progressive decline which ends in the restriction of their sway to portions of the Tinnevelly district and, towards the close of the sixteenth century, in their final disappearance from the pages of history." There were repercussions in Ramanathapuram district of the decline and fall of the central power in Madurai.

Some prominent historians believe that Kafur's invasion had nothing to do with Sundara Pandya's appeal. They argue that the Muslim historians of the incident "do not suggest that Malik Kafur's invasion of Ma'bar was caused by these differences (between the sons of Maravarman Kulasekhara) and on an appeal from him (Sundara), and they say nothing as to the effects of the invasion on the relative position of the two royal brothers of the Pandya country. There is, thus, no reason to suppose that Sundara Pandya was restored to the throne of Madura and that a Muhammadan garrison was left behind in this city for his protection". In this view, "no ruler of Delhi before Muhammad bin Tughlak ever contemplated the permanent annexation of the extreme south of the peninsula, though the Sultans had no objection to send out expeditions which returned with a vast amount of plundered wealth".

It is not clear whether the Marava country was directly affected by the events in the capital. Some historians believe that Kafur did not come there at all, and the story of the mosque in or near Ramesvaram is doubted. The Maravas continued under the rule of the local chieftains.

But within two decades of Kafur's raid a Sultanate was established in Madurai, and though it lasted less than half a century its influence spread into Ramanathapuram district. A

Muslim Governor seems to have been appointed over it. He might have set up his headquarters in Kandadevi near Devakottai, to judge from the fact that the place contains one of the only two epigraphs in the Marava country dated in the Hijra era, 771 or 1393 A.D. (The other, in Tirukkolakkudi, belongs to 761 or 1383 A.D.). It is possible that, though Kampanna, the Vijayanagar prince, had destroyed the Sultanate in 1371, relics of, Muslim power survived in Ramanathapuram district for a few-years. This was quite feasible at a time when communication-between the capital and the provinces were difficult

The advent of Vijayanagar. so graphically described in "Madhuravijayam" of Gangadevi, a consort of the conqueror, marks a turning point in the history of Ramanathapuram district. There are not many inscriptions of the imperial power in the Marava land. But the few that have been discovered throw light on some events.

Inscriptions of Kampanna in the Jagannathaswami temple in Tiruppullani record his gifts and endowments to that fane. Before or after his visit to Tiruppullani he must have made his pilgrimage to Rameswaram. In the fifteenth century Narasa Nayaka, the father of Krishnadevaraya, worshipped in Rameswram after having defeated what has been called the Marava ruler of Maduai at the time. The latter might have been a Bana.

After the Muslim invasions and the subsequent developments, the Pandya of historic memory had little control over Madurai and its environs. Some chieftains bearing the honoured name ruled in outlying parts of the old kingdom. An epigraph from Tirukkolakkudi mentions a Ko-Maravarman Virapandyadeva, ruling in his thirty-first year, when Kampanna Udayar, after destroying the Muslims, appointed several "Nayakars". In the fifteenth century there is a record in Tiruppattur of a Jatavarman Sundara Pandya, who ruled from

1401 to 1422. In the following century, the sixteenth Saluva Nayak, helped by Thumbichi Nayak of Paramakudi, and the king of "Tiruvadi", revolted against Achutaraya. The emperor, after worshipping in Tirupathi, Kalahasthi, and Kanchi (where in the Sri Varada temple he weighed himself against pearls which were given away in charity) arrived in Srirangam. A subordinate, Salakaraju Chinna Tirumala, conducted the campaign against the confederates and was victorious. He won a battle on the banks of the Tambraparni. At the end of the successful expedition he offered worship in Rameswaram.

The Madurai Nayak rule of Ramanathapuram district was heralded by the despatch by Krishnadevaraya to the southern province of Nagama Nayak to quell disturbances there. He succeeded, but set up in independence. The emperor sent Viswanatha, Nagama's son, to chastise him. Viswanatha carried out the order and was appointed viceroy of the southern province. With this begins the history of the Nayaks of Madurai and a new chapter in the history of the Marava land.

Ganesa in the excavated cave temple, Pillaiyarpatti,
Pandyan art—6-7th cent. A.D.

Siva as Lingodhbhava — in the excavated cave, Pillaiyarpatti

Ganesa in between rock-cut caves 1 & 2, Kunnakkudi, Pandyan art, 8th cent.

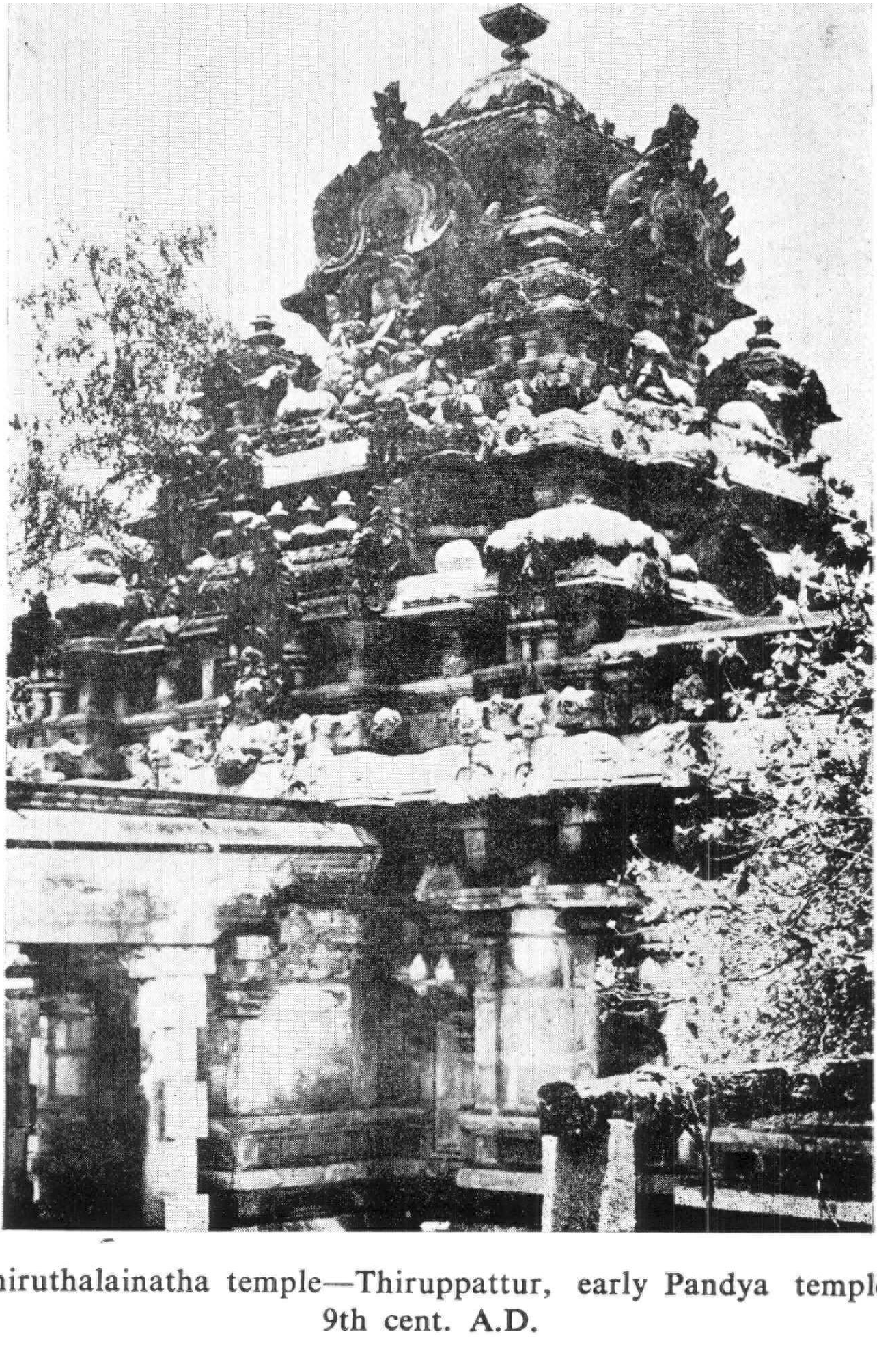
Ganesa in the rock-cut cave 1 — Kunnakkudi, Pandyan art, 8th cent.

Harihara in the excavated cave temple, Pillaiyarpatti,
Pandyan art 6th cent. A.D.

Dancing Siva in the excavated cave temple—Kunnakkudi, Pandyan art 8th cent. A.D., The original rock cut sculpture is covered with stucco of recent period.

Dvarapala in the excavated cave I, Kunnakkudi.

Garudantika Vishnu in the excavated cave 2, Kunnakkudi.



Thiruthalainatha temple—Thiruppattur, early Pandya temple, 9th cent. A.D.

CHAPTER III

THE SETHUPATHIS

The Madurai Nayak dynasty, beginning with Viswanatha in 1529 and ending with Queen Minakshi in 1736, brought two centuries of development to the Marava land. It faced many problems, and it committed some mistakes. On the whole, however, the period was an era of progress. The first Nayak had an able auxiliary in Aryanatha, his Dalavay and Pradhani, and he was able to introduce administrative reforms in the kingdom, including Ramanathapuram district. At his death his kingdom contained the modern geographical divisions of Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli, Tiruchi, the Travancore part of Kerala and also perhaps Salem and Coimbatore.

Viswanatha introduced the "palaiyam" system, dividing his kingdom into seventy-two parts, each with a Palayakar, or in English polegar, at the head. (Incidentally, these seventy-two chieftains were each responsible for the defence of the same number of bastions of Madurai fort). They were given full local powers, including peace keeping and judicial administration, and in return they were to pay one-third of their land revenue as tribute to Madurai, and spend another third on maintaining troops which the suzerain could call upon in times of need. Loyal services were rewarded with remissions of the tribute, sometimes the whole of it.

The battle of Rakshas Tangadi was fought in the second year of the reign of Krishnappa I, Viswanatha's son and successor. It took some time for its effects to be felt so far south as Madurai and Ramanathapuram districts. The revolt of one of the polegars, Tumbichi, which occurred early in

the new reign, was unconnected with that catastrophe. Tumbichi had perhaps reason to expect preferential treatment from the Nayak, for an inscription in Kizhakkarai, dated between 1538 and 1547, mentions him along with Achutha Raya himself. However this might have been, he rose in revolt in Paramakudi. It was only at a second attempt that the royal forces were able to defeat him.

Ramanathapuram district might have figured as a base for Krishnappa's invasion of Lanka. According to a Mackenzie manuscript, his fleet set out from Navapashanam and landed in Mannar. While the "Mahavamsa" does not specifically mention the invasion, some Indian sources give meticulous details of Krishnappa's success which, they say, was quite considerable.

In the next reign, that of Virappa, Ramanathapuram figures in two incidents. A Mavali Vanadarayar, evidently a Bana, rebelled. Like Tumbichi under Viswanatha, Vanadarayar might have thought his status of a polegar under the new dispensation altogether insignificant. For, some of his ancestors are mentioned in epigraphs of the sixteenth century found in district; Mahabali Vanadaraya Nayakkar in Tiruppullani, dated 1518, Sundarattoludaiyar Mahavali Vanadarayar in the same place, dated ten years later; the same magnate two further years later in Kalaiyarkoil; in the same place by Mavali Vanadarayar in 1532; and again Sundarattoludaiya Mahabali Vanadarayar in Devipatnam in 1533.

The descendant of these nobles fortified Manamadurai and Kalaiyarakoil and seized the neighbouring territory in defiance of his suzerain. But Virappa acted promptly. For his own part, Virappa is said to have constructed a fort in Aruppukottai.

Nothing relevant to Ramanathapuram district is reported to have occurred in the reign of Krishnappa II, which lasted five years and nine months. But there was an important deve-

lopment in the next reign, Muthu Krishnappa's (1601-1609). This was the "settlement" of the Marava country.

This Nayak had to act for three reasons. For long the Pandyas and his predecessors had left the coastal area, particularly the Tirunelveli region, to itself. The Arabs had settled down in Kizakkarai (as well as in Kayalpatnam, in Tirunelveli district). By the middle of the sixteenth century the Portuguese had established themselves in Tuticorin, Vaipar and Punnaikayal. Francis Xavier came to the Tirunelveli coast in 1542 and converted large sections of the coastal people to Christianity. It looked as if the Portuguese aimed at establishing an overseas province of their empire. (In the twentieth century they called Goa and their other remaining possessions an integral part of Portugal). They exercised civil and criminal powers without reference to any Indian ruler. Bishop Caldwell sums up the situation, "Xavier......speaks of the Paravas as 'subjects of His Portuguese Majesty'......The entire civil and criminal jurisdiction of the fishery coast had been seized upon by the Portuguese and......all dues and taxes, including the valuable revenue arising from the pearl fishery, had been assumed by the governors appointed by the Portuguese Viceroy. The Portuguese had not asked any native potentate's consent to the formation of their settlements".

These were political and financial reasons for Muthu Krishnappa's intervention. The third was religious. Because of the disturbed conditions, the pilgrim route to Rameswaram became unsafe. The pilgrims frequently requested the Nayak to intervene. He finally did so; the date might have been 1605. Two years later was engraved the first inscription of the Sethupathis of this period.

The Nayak set up Sadaika Thevar or Udayan Raghunatha Sethupathi as his agent in the Marava land. He could have been restored to this position after he had initially lost it or,

more probably, he was newly appointed to it. It is possible that in early times a Marava chieftain had been overtly or tacitly set up by the overlord, Pandya, Chola, Nayak or other, to control the region. But there seems to have been no question of any hereditary succession. With Sadaika's rise the history of Ramanathapuram district is largely the history of the Sethupathis.

It is said that one day some pilgrims to Rameswaram found Sadaika, then a boy, sleeping under a tamarind tree with a cobra spreading its hood over him. This was regarded as a sign of coming royalty or at least nobility. Sadaika earned his spurs. He made the pilgrim route to Rameswaram safe by arranging escorts for the pilgrims and by fortifying Ramanathapuram town and Bogalur. He subdued the turbulent magnates and established a strong administration in Kalaiyarkoil, Pattamangalam and other places. The Nayak in Madurai must have been convinced that he had made a good choice.

Sadaika survived Muthu Krishnappa Nayak by twelve years, dying in 1621. He was a great benefactor of his land. He cleared forests and fostered agriculture. He provided incentives to people to settle down in the region. He made many gifts to the Rameswaram temple. An inscription recorded there, dated 1607, states that Dalavay Sethupathi Kattatevar presented five villages to the temple of Ramanathaswami and Parvartavardhani Amman for worship and offerings. A copper plate inscription of the next year mentions his grant of land "on the occasion of his pilgrimage to the people of the 'five countries' who served as priests, worshippers and cooks in the temple". Some of the honorifics awarded to him in this inscription read quaintly :

"The lord of the city of Tevai; the responsible agent for the protection of the Sethu embankment; the responsible agent for the charities of Ramanathaswami; who is actively engaged in

worshipping Siva: the chief of all other kings; the destroyer of the army of Ariyaraya; who cuts into a thousand pieces and three thousand pieces those failing in the correctness of their language; who conquers all the country that he sees and never gives back a country once conquered; the punisher of Muvaraya; the lord of the valorous and the fertile country; the protector of the Brahmans studying the Vedas; who has put down the prosperity of the valorous and inimical Yavana kings; living in Karattur of the Tukavur division".

In 1608, again, Dalavay Setupati Kattatevar made a gift of eight villages to the temple.

Bogalur was "the primary capital" of Sadaika and he fortified it. Lying ten miles north-west of Ramanathapuram, it is today little more than a hamlet. It is said to have contained a big fort, a palace and a military cantonment. Not a trace of these survives. It ceased to be the capital in Kizhavan Sethupathi's reign as an independent sovereign, free of Madurai control (1674-1710). But, it appears, a part of the coronation ceremonies was performed in Bogalur in later times.

Saidaika's son and successor, Koothan, ruled for fourteen years. His reign was one of peace. He was a pious man and made many endowments to the Tiruvadanai temple and added many buildings to the Rameswaram fame.

Dalavai Raghunatha, also called Sadaika II, Koothan's brother, who followed him, had the great Tirumala Nayak as his contemporary in Madurai. Raghunatha was a man of mettle unlike his gentle brother, and he brought about a civil war. Early in his reign he nominated Raghunatha, his nephew, as his successor. But Pedanna Nayaka, who was an illegitimate son of Sadaika, rose in arms. Also known as Tambi Thevar, he was then in charge of the Kalaiyarkoil area.

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The rebel obtained Tirumala Nayak's support, perhaps because Dalavai Raghunatha had withheld his tribute and was insubordinate. The details of this campaign are contained in the historical poem, "Ramappaiyan Ammanai", named after the commander-in-chief of the Madurai army which was ordered to place Tambi Thevar on the throne.

Ramappaiyan, who had Rangama Nayak as his second in command, led a "vast" army along the Vaigai. At the end of the first day it bivouacked in Chinnaravuttanpalayam, and at the end of the second in Vandiyur. A march of two days brought it to Manamadurai (the old name of this town was Manavira Madurai) through Tiruppuvanam. Sadaika II met this army in Ariyanadapurakottai and defeated it. The Madurai army lost three hundred dead and its camp was plundered, while the Sethupathi's forces suffered six fatal casualties.

But Ramappaiyan, undeterred by this reverse, attacked again the next day and captured Ariyanadapurakottai. Pursuing the fleeing Marava army, he crossed the Vaigai and again met it in battle in Avtiyuttikottai. Sadaika fought bravely, but was worsted. He was himself wounded, and had to seek refuge in Rameswaram.

The refugee now received a respite. The poem states that Tirumala Nayak ordered Ramappaiyan to meet a challenge on his northern frontiers by the Sultan of Bijapur. Having routed the Muslims, Ramappaiyan returned to the southern sector where he laid siege to Rameswaram.

To do this he had to build a bridge. His followers doubted whether he could. But he himself carried the first stone, and the ballad says that he rebuilt the Sethu. Sadaika obtained the support of the Dutch from Lanka, and the invaders that of the Portuguese. (This is a historical fact). There were some naval battles. Sadaika's able general, Vanniyan, was

killed, and Sadaika himself was captured, to be imprisoned in Madurai.

TAMIL NADU STATE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Tambi Thevar was installed as the Sethupathi. But he became unpopular with his subjects and he also incurred the bitter hostility of Raghunatha and Narayana, the nephews of the previous Sethupathi. Moreover, he was unable to preserve peace on the Rameswaram pilgrim route. A sect of Vaishnava devotees who visited Rameswaram at this time implored Tirumala Nayak to restore Sadaika. Thus Sadaika returned from prison to throne.

He did not remain there for long, He made himself very popular with his subjects. He built the Chokkanathaswami temple in Rameswaram and made generous gifts to the Ramanatha temple. But Tambi Tevar contrived to murder him in 1646 after he had ruled for five years.

However, the Marava leaders refused to accept the regicide as their ruler. Thereupon Tirumala Nayak partitioned the kingdom into three, allotting the Ramanathapuram region to Raghunatha, the Sivaganga territory to Tambi Thevar and the Tiruvadanai region jointly to Thanakka and Narayana who were the younger brothers of Raghunatha. But shortly after Thanakka and Tambi died, and the entire Marava country came under Raghunatha.

Before this Raghunatha had captured Tiruvarur, Arantangi, Devakottai, Pattukottai and Mannarkoil from the Tanjore Raja. He was, therefore, the ruler of a large territory. He remained a supporter of Tirumala Nayak. An opportunity soon arrived to demonstrate his loyalty.

Kanthirava Narasa, the King of Mysore, whom Tirumala Nayak had defeated in a battle in 1625, invaded Satyamangalam, a province belonging to Tirumala, in 1656 and was

marching on Madurai. The Mysore general "is said to have executed the barbarous orders of his master by cutting off the noses of all who fell into his hands, not excluding even women and children, and sending them to Mysore". Tirumala Nayak was ill and could not take the field. He appealed to Raghunatha for help.

The Marava leader acted decisively. He is said to have levied an army of 25,000 men in a single day. He rushed to Madurai and lifted the Mysoreans' siege after two battles. The Nayak was very grateful. He remitted the tribute altogether, awarded him the titles of "Tirumalai Sethupathi" and the "protector of the Queen's thali", and granted him the cherished privilege of using the lion faced palanquin. More concretely, he gave him the villages of Tiruchuli, Tiruppuvanam and Pallimadam.

The Sethupathi performed further services to the Nayak. He easily suppressed a Muslim rebellion led by one Kutub Khan. More serious was a revolt by an alliance of polegars led by the Ettayapuram chief. The Sethupathi made short work of this too. His grateful sovereign made him the "protector" of the pearl fishery off the Gulf of Mannar, a gift of great value, and also gave him a large territory near Mannarkoil, now in Tirunelveli district.

Tirumala presented the Sethupathi with a gold image of Rajarajeswari. Its temple is now in the Ramalinga Vilas Palace in Ramanathapuram and it continues under worship. Raghnuatha introduced the Navarathri festival in the Marava land. It was a great festival under the Nayaks in Madurai, and in Hampi it had been the supreme festival of the year. Many foreign visitors to the capital of the empire have testified to its splendour. The platform known as the "Dasara Dibba" is a relic of it. The festival was celebrated nearly everywhere under Vijayanagar influence. It used to be a great occasion in Mysore too.

Raghunatha introduced Telugu, the Nayak's mother-tongue, as an additional court language in Ramanathapuram. It is said that this was to "honour his overlord". The Sethupathi was a man of great piety. He made frequent pilgrimages to Rameswaram. On one of these occasions he performed the "Hiranyagarbha" sacrifice and assumed the title of "Hirnayagarbhayaji", which his successors inherited. He built the Vanasankari and a Mariamman temple. He made gifts to a number of other fanes, in Tiruchuli, Anaiyur, Melachiruppottu, Velimuthy and Vadathakkulam. He also endowed the Kothandarama choultry in Rameswaram. He built a village on the island that would be accessible through the bridge built by Ramappaiyan. He also endowed the Tiruvadudurai matha in Tanjavur district.

The Setupathi gloried in honorafics, like not a few of his predecessor in other parts of the Tamil country. In a copper plate inscription dated 1697 he is called "Tevdi Nagaradipan", "Sethumularakshaka Durandharan", "Ramanathaswami Karya Durandharan", "Vaigai Vala Nadan", "Bharatha Nataka Praveenan", and "Tondian Turai Kavalan".

The last years of Raghunatha's reign were marred by a war with the Nayak. Though Tirumala was a powerful ruler, with vaster resources than the Sethupathi, he seems to have feared that his vassal had become overgrown, and he had cause for complaint in that Ramanathapuram had not aided him in repelling a Muslim invasion. Whatever the reasons, the Nayak suddenly captured Manamadurai, Kalaiyarkoil, Tiruppattur and Pudukkottai. But the Maravas, fighting in their own land and familiar with its difficult terrain, recovered most of what they had lost. It is said that the Sethupathi was deeply grieved at the initial losses his forces had suffered and for some time would not receive any visitor.

The great Sethupathi died in 1674 after having reigned a quarter of a century. He may not bulk as large in Marava history as his second successor, Kizhavan. But he was altogether a nobler ruler, and his reign has left a deep cultural impress on the land.

His nephew, Rajasurya, who succeeded him, ruled only for six months. There was a succession dispute in the Tanjavur court. Little love was lost between the Nayakas of Madurai and Tanjavur. Muthuvirappa, Tirumala Nayak's successor in Madurai, inherited the enmity, and he did not help Vijayaraghava, his contemporary in Tanjavur, when the latter was attacked by Bijapur. Chokkanatha, who followed Muthuvirappa, was enraged at the fact that Tanjavur had helped the Muslims in besieging Tiruchi, now the capital of the Madurai Nayak kingdom. War broke out in 1673. The Madurai Dalavay, Venkatakrishnappa, marched on Tanjavur and killed Vijayaraghava in a battle on the outskirts of the capital. Chokkanatha annexed Tanjavur and appointed Azhagiri, a foster brother of his, as the viceroy.

But the brothers of Madurai and Tanjavur soon fell out. Azhagiri resented his subordination to Chokkanatha. It was now ascertained that a boy, a sole survivor of Vijayaraghava's family, was being brought up by a merchant in Nagapatnam. An enemy of Azhagiri in the Tanjavur court intrigued with the Bijapur Sultan against the viceroy. The Sultan despatched Ekoji Bhonsle, a half-brother of the great Shivaji, to place the boy, Chengamala Nayak or Chengamaladas, on the Tanjavur throne. This was ultimately to lead to the establishment of the Tanjavur Mahratta rule.

Rajasurya Sethupathi supported the boy's pretensions. Ekoji defeated Azhagiri in a battle near Ayyampet and enthroned Chengamaladas about 1674. But the new reign lasted hardly a few months. Ekoji captured Tanjavur without

any difficulty. It was about this time that Rajasurya went to the help of Chengamaladas. Venkatakrishnappa captured him and had him killed subsequently.

Rajasurya was followed by Athana Raghunatha, a brother of his, but the latter died within three months of his succession, under what circumstances it is not known. There was an interregnum of two years before Kizhavan arrived on the stage of history. Between 1674 and 1710, when he died, he transformed Marava history. If his predecessor, Raghunatha, was a noble ruler, Kizhavan was an effective and forceful one.

The chief events of his rule were the declaration of independence from Madurai, the rise of the Pudukkottai royal house, the change of capital from Bogalur to Ramanathapuram, and the incident of Father de Britto.

Kizhavan began with a deed of blood. He got rid of those who had helped make him ruler. But his second was a service to the Nayak kingdom. Chokkanatha, in Tiruchi was a weak ruler. Following the loss of two frontier fortresses to the Mysore forces, he was deposed on the ground of insanity and imprisoned. His younger brother, Muthulinga, also named Muthu Azhakadri, took his place, but he too was incompetent. To add to the country's travails. destructive floods washed away whole villages. A foreign missionary, writing in 1678, describes the ruin of Madurai in terms similar to the devastation of Hampi after Rakshas Tangadi in 1565. This graphic account is worth quoting in part;

"The principal lords of the kingdom, vexed at the conduct of the Nayak (Chokkanatha), conspired against him, put him in prison on the pretext of madness, and raised to the throne Muthulinga Nayaka, his brother, whose government is neither wiser nor less tyrannical. All over the country only lamentations and imprecations are heard against the authors of such

cruelties. To make matters worse, the whole country has been devastated by a kind of deluge; in the provinces of Sathyamangalam, Trichinopoly, Tanjore and Gingi, the inundations have carried away whole villages with all their inhabitants. This scourge of divine anger was soon followed by famine, pestilence and, at last, brigandage which infests all the kingdom. The capital, once so flourishing, is no longer recognizable; its palaces, once so rich and majestic, are deserted and begin to fall into ruins; Madura resembles much less a town than a den of robbers.

"The new Nayak (Muthulinga) is *par excellence* a *roi faineant;* he sleeps day and night, and his neighbours, who do not sleep, dispossess him every moment of some shred of his dominions. The people, who have only to gain by a change of domination, do not care to resist the invaders; and everyone forebodes that this kingdom, so powerful twenty years ago, will soon be a prey to its enemies or, rather, the victim of the mad policy of its own government".

At this juncture, Rustam Khan, an able cavalry officer with great influence, attempted to usurp the throne. When Muthulinga Nayak left the fortress of Tiruchi, now the capital, he closed its gates and assumed royal powers. He released Chokkanatha from prison and proclaimed him king, but only as a creature of his. Rustam Khan's usurpation lasted two years.

About 1680 the Mysore army besieged Tiruchi, and Rustam Khan could not defend it properly. A plot was formed against him, in which the Sethupathi took part, and he was killed. But Chokkanatha, while benefiting from the Sethupathi's help, came to resent his growing influence and power. He had conferred on him the title of "Pararaja Kesari", but fear replaced gratitude. Nor could the sagacious Kizhavan fail to observe the feebleness of the Nayak power. Chengalamadas

was to prove the last Nayak ruler in Tanjavur, and Kizhavan could have thought that his brother of Madurai also was on his last legs.

In 1686 the Sethupathi supported a revolt by Venkatakrishna, a former Dalavay who rose against Muthuvirappa III, Chokkanatha's successor. A confederate was Chengamaladas. Kizhavan agreed to cede to Chengamaladas the area between Pamban and Pudukkottai for twelve years in return for military help. But the campaign did not materialise. Kumara Pillai, who was Kizhavan's Dalavay in Ramanathapuram, not only disapproved of the scheme but attempted to capture the Sethupathi and Venkatakrishna and hand them over to Muthuvirappa as traitors. This plot miscarried and it ended in the execution of the Dalavay.

Kizhavan's friendship with Chengalamadas was a fragile one. A dispute arose over the territories which the Tanjavur Nayak had promised to cede to the Sethupathi by a treaty in 1686. The intention was that the possession of certain areas in Tanjavur district which Raghunatha Sethupathi had captured, but which were held under a light administration, should be placed on a firm foundation. The Tanjavur Nayak ignored this treaty. Kizhavan ordered an expedition which captured the fortresses of Arantangi, Tirumayam, and Piranmalai and all the areas south of the Ambari river.

It was now Muthuvirappa's turn to order an expedition. It is said to have "overrun the whole of the Marava country" in its first onset. It penetrated near the capital. A battle there was indecisive. But a few days later another battle was fought, in which the Madurai forces, led by Varabogi Pandithan, were repulsed and that was the end of this war.

But Rani Mangammal, the mother of Muthuvirappa, who had died in 1689, acting as Regent for his infant son, renewed

the struggle. She must have done so because Kizhavan was already, for all practical purposes, acting as an independent sovereign. It is said that he paid what tribute "he liked". It would even appear that, in 1698, he besieged Madurai, captured it and held it for some time.

The Rani must also have been angered by Kizhavan's alliance with Shahji, the Tanjavur king, in a war she conducted against him in 1700. The upshot was that two years later the Mudurai forces, now in alliance with those of Tanjavur, invaded the Marava country. But the Maravas were always at a great advantage in fighting in their homeland with its difficult terrain, and they beat the invasion back. The invaders lost their Dalavay, Narasappaiya, killed in the fighting.

About 1702, probably at the end of this campaign, Kizhavan become independent. He strengthened the frontiers of his kingdom. He followed this up by repulsing another invasion, this time by Tanjavur. This was at a time when the Marava country was ravaged by famine and floods, and yet Kizhavan defeated the invaders. He also captured the strong fortress of Arantangi.

The second important event in Kizhavan's reign, the rise of Tondaiman rule in Pudukottai, seems to have occurred because he suspected the loyalty of a vassal of his, Pallavarayan Tondaiman, the chief of the area. The latter appears to have intended transferring his allegiance to Tanjavur. Kizhavan forestalled this by appointing in his place Raghunatha, who was brother to a wife of his Kathalai. History held different fates for the three Marava principalities. While Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga, one of its offshoots, were to become zamindaris, though big ones, Pudukottai, another offshoot, was to be a princely State until it was merged with the Indian Union.

The third event was the change of capital from Bogalur to Ramanathapuram. Kizhavan pulled down the mud walls of the fort in his new capital and built stone walls twenty-seven feet high and five thick, with a deep moat surrounding them. His palace was constructed in the centre of the fort. Called the "Ramalinga Vilas", it is in a good state of preservation. It possesses a priceless collection of murals, some depicting historical events, including a few described above and later.

Outside the palace Kizhavan caused a reservoir, the "Mugavai urani", to be excavated. This was a splendid act of benefaction in a dry country, and Kizhavan came to be called "Mugavai urani Aiya".

The Sethupathi was also a great religious benefactor. He made large endowments to the temples in Rameswaram, Tiruppullani, Mudakalathur and Tiruchuli. He built a choultry in Tonithurai and bestowed grants on another in Pudumadam.

It was in Kizhavan's reign that Father de Britto, the Catholic missionary, was executed, perhaps the solitary instance of religious persecution on the part of south Indian kings.

One of sources of information states that Kizhavan had forty-seven wives and that, on his death, they all performed "sati". An area in Ramanathapuram is "even today pointed out as the place" where this occurred.

The independence which Kizhavan had secured for the Marava kingdom lasted hardly a century, till 1795, when Muthuramalinga was deposed and the East India Company took over the country. Six Sethupathis were in power during this time. It was a period of constant war, disputed successions, and general unsettlement. But the Marava history

in the eighteenth century was not unusual in this. Generally in south India it was a period of turmoil, what with the Carnatic wars between the English and the French, and the disturbances caused by the rivalry of the Nawab of Arcot and the Raja of Tanjavur.

Yet this phase of Marava history began brightly. Tiru-udaya, a nephew of Kizhavan's, who succeeded him, was one of the most enlightened Sethupathis. On accession he took the title of Vijaya Raghunatha Thevar. His first task was to mitigate the effects of a famine, caused by an unprecedentedly severe cyclone, which had afflicted the land in Kizhavan's last days. He improved the irrigation sources. He also reorganised the revenue administration by bringing in Vellala accountants from Madurai. He divided his kingdom into eight revenue, and seventy-two military districts, appointing chieftains over the latter. He built forts in Pamban, Kamuthi, Tiruppattur, Arantangi, Rajasingamangalam and Oriyur.

Vijaya Raghunatha was an exemplary devotee. He is said to have worshipped the Lord of Rameswaram every day, travelling to the temple by relays of horses. According to tradition, the Lord once appeared to him a dream to say that he need no longer offer daily worship in Rameswaram and that he could offer worship near a well in Lakshmipuram, a suburb of Ramanathapuram. He located the well and built the Muthuramalingaswami temple near it. He also endowed the Kothandaramaswami temple in the same town with liberality.

The Sethupathi did all he could to ensure the safety of the Rameswaram pilgrims This concern indirectly led him to an unfortunate action. He placed his son-in-law, who had married two of his daughters, in charge of the welfare of the pilgrims. Without authority from the Sethupathi, the son-in-law levied a pilgrim tax to pay for the removal of sand hills between Pamban and Rameswaram and to build a

road connecting the two places. The Sethupathi, much angered when he came to know of this, had him executed despite the entreaties of his two daughters. They performed "sati". Their memory lives in two choultries, the "Akkalmadam" and the "Thangachimadam". The latter has given its name to a railway station between Pamban and Rameswaram.

It was in this reign that the Nalukottai family developed into the Sivaganga chieftaincy. One Nalukottai Udaya Thevar had a son, Sasivarna Thevar, who married Akilandeswarai Nachiar, a daughter of the Sethupathi, who gave him considerable land as dowry. He later became inimical to the Sethupathi. His further story belongs to the reign of Sundareswara Raghunatha, the successor of Vijaya Raghunatha.

Bhavanisankara, an illegitimate son of Kizhavan, had disputed the succession of Vijaya Raghunatha himself and now, under his successor, the dispute became acute. Sundareswara Raghunatha, also known as Thanda Thevar, was aided by the Tondaiman of Pudukottai, while the Tanjavur Raja supported Bhavanisankara, who promised to restore to him all the territories Kizhavan had taken away. At the end of the following campaign in which figured the armies of Madurai, Tanjavur and Pudukottai, not to mention those of the rival Maravas, Bhavanisankara captured his opponent and had him killed.

But Bhavanisankara could rule only for a short period, five years according to one source, three according to another. He angered Sasivarna Thevar of Sivaganga by taking away from him Vallikottai, one of the eight revenue districts of the Marava country. Sasivarna fled to Thanjavur where he found another malcontent in Kattaiah Thevar, a brother of Thanda Thevar's, who had fled from Ramanathapuram when Bhavanisankara had captured it. The Raja of Thanjavur, whose dynasty bore inveterate hatred to that of Ramanathapuram,

provided them with a force, and with it they invaded the Marava country, defeated Bhavanisankara, and sent him prisoner to Thanjavur. This was in 1729.

But the result was the partition of the Marava country among Kattaiah, Sasivarna, and the Raja of Tanjavur. Of the five parts into which the rest of the country was divided after the Raja had taken his share Sasivarna took two and the remaining three went to Kattaiah. Under Kizhavan the kingdom had extended to five thousand square miles; now it was a small principality, practically the Ramnad zamindari of recent times.

It would be convenient to trace here the fortunes of the Sivaganga kingdom until it became a zamindari under the British in 1801. Sasivarna died in 1750 and his son, Muthuvaduganatha Peria Udayar Thevar, succeeded him. He ruled for thirty years. The earlier part of his reign was peaceful and prosperous, but later he came into conflict with the Nawab of the Carnatic, who had by now appeared on the political scene of south Tamil Nadu. He was killed in a battle in Kalaiyarkoil in 1780. His widow, Velu Nachiar, and their daughter, Vellachi, fled Sivaganga.

About this time the Marudhu brothers, so famous in the annals of the freedom struggle in Tamil Nadu, appeared on the scene. Originally "adappaikkarans", or betel-nut bearers of Muthuvadugunatha (this employment was not a menial one as it might appear; it was a position of some dignity carrying with it the right to be present near the throne), they were the sons of Udaiyar Servai, or Mokka Palaniappa Servai, and Anandhayai, or Ponnathal. Peria Marudhu was born in 1748 and Chinna Marudhu five years later. They received their name after the family deity, Marudappaswami.

After Muthvadugunatha's death in battle, the brothers, together with Velu Nachiar, fled to Dindigul, where Hyder Ali

gave them asylum and helped them expel the Nawab, an inveterate enemy of his, from the Sivaganga territory. The Nawab had to accept Velu Nachiar as the ruler in Sivaganga, and the Marudhus became her ministers.

But they fell out with Velu Nachiar when she adopted a Padamattur Gowrivallabha as her son, intending that he should succeed her. In a counter-move, they had Vellachi Nachiar, the daughter of Muthuvaduganatha and Velu Nachiar, married to one Vengan Peria Udaya Thevar of Nalukottai. They made things difficult for Gowrivallabha who then, with his brother, fled to Pudukottai. Velu Nachiar died about 1790. The Marudhus thereupon installed Vellachi as her successor, but they were the real rulers. When Vellachi herself passed away in 1793, one of the Marudhus got a daughter of his married to the widower.

Then followed their opposition to the British pretensions. When that episode ended in their destruction, as will be related in the next chapter, the British installed Gowrivallabha as the Zamindar of Sivaganga. This was in 1801.

To return to the Sethupathis. Kattaiah, who ruled over a Shrunken kingdom, made large religious gifts. He erected the Balasubramaniaswami temple in Rameswaram, and made liberal grants to the Rameswaram, Tiruppullani and Kizhakarai temples. He built a choultry in Thangachimadam and another near Tiruvadanai.

Little of note occurued in the reign of Sivakumara Muthuvijaya Raghunatha Thevar, who ascended the throne in 1735 and ruled till 1748. His successor, Rakka Thevar, held power for only a year, but that period was eventful. The Raja of Tanjavur invaded the kingdom, but was repulsed by the Dalavay, Vellayan Servaigar. The latter, also put down a number of refractory polegars in Tirunelveli. But the Sethu-

pathi was alarmed at the Dalavay's personal aggrandisement and recalled him. On his return the Dalavay rebelled against his master, who fled to Pamban, but was pursued and taken prisoner. Chella Thevar, or Vijaya Raghunatha, became Sethupathi in 1749.

This reign was eventful. First, the Dalavay beat back an invasion by the Tanjavur army. Secondly, he, together with Thandavaraya Pillai, the Sivaganga minister, besieged a Captain Cope who had occupied Madurai on behalf of the Raja of Mysore, and forced him to capitulate. They installed an adopted son of Rani Minakshi on the throne. But not long after he was deposed by the agents of the Nawab of the Carnatic. The Dalavay again attacked Madurai. Defeating the Muslims, he allowed them to hold the city, but as tributaries to the Sethupathi and severing all connections with the Nawab.

The English shadow was now lengthening on the Ramanathapuram scene. The Sethupathi first supported Chanda Sahib in his mortal dispute with Muhammad Ali for the Nawabship, but later aided Muhammad Ali. He also offered the English two settlements on the Ramanathapuram coast. His intention was to subdue the recalcitrant Tirunelveli polegars with English help. Colonel Heron, the English commander, accepted the offer and signed an agreement with the Sethupathi without consulting Madras. The Sethupathi then sent an army of five thousand men under the command of his brother, Subbaraya, to march on Tirunelveli. But the Tanjavur king and the Tondaiman protested strongly, and Madras ordered Heron to disavow the treaty. The Sethupathi's troops were within five miles of Tirunelveli when they were recalled.

The Dutch asked permission to set up settlements in Kizhakkarai and elsewhere. The Sethupathi granted it under certain conditions. But though they were not allowed to fortify their "factories", they did so. The Sethupathi imprisoned some

of the Dutch in his capital and they were not released until they apologised. Despite this incident, the Dutch were on friendly terms with the Sethupathi.

The last of the independent Sethupathis was an infant two months old when he was proclaimed. Muthuramalinga was a nephew of Chella. His mother, Muthu Thiruvayi became Regent and Damodara Pillai, an able officer Dalavay. The latter strengthened the Ramanathapuram fort and built another in Tiruppullani.

Meanwhile, the Nawab of the Carnatic had seized power in Madurai and Tirunelveli When he proposed to collect revenue from the polegars, the Sethupathi included, he reckoned without their sturdy opposition. An army he sent was defeated. But the Dalavay knew that he had to provide for the future, and so he signed a treaty with the Dutch. The English, as creditors of the Nawab, were bound to support his efforts to collect revenue and the Dutch, their strong rivals at the time, were the obvious people to cultivate.

Under this treaty the Dutch were to give the Sethupathi a share of the pearl fishery from the Madurai coast. They were allowed possession of the Pamban canal (but the Sethupathi's people had free access to it) and given powers to permit or prohibit the entry of other foreigners.

At this time the Raja of Thanjavur, claiming Hanumanthagudi district for himself, invaded the Marava Land. But Damodara Pillai defeated him. This was in 1770. But unfortunately for the Sethupathi the able Dalavay was murdered by a private enemy soon after.

The Nawab represented to the Brittish in Madras that the Raja's invasion was an invasion of his own territory because the Marava land was a vassal kingdom of his. With the support of

their troops he imposed a harsh peace on the Raja. Next alleging that Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga had not assisted him in this attack as they ought to have, he instigated the British to invade them. In 1773 an English army under General Joseph Smith attacked the Marava kingdom on behalf of the Nawab and defeated the Sethupathi's troops. The young king, his mother, the Regent and his sister, Mangaleswari Nachiar, were taken to Tiruchi.

For eight years, until 1780, the kingdom remained under the Nawab's rule. But the Maravas would not accept it, and discontent seethed in the land. The Nawab, recognising the inevitable, restored the infant Sethupathi. Three "Pradhanis", Muthiah Pillai, Vellu Pillai and Sankaran Pillai, were appointed, apparently to act as a "troika". But they neglected their duties and were replaced by Muthirulappa Pillai. He realised that real power lay with the British, and he co-operated with them. He paid the tribute, fixed at Rs. 1,75,000, regularly.

The British, finding that the Nawab would not or could not pay his share of the military expenses, assumed management of his territory by proclamation, and established the Board of Assigned Revenues to administer the receipts. McLeod was, in September, 1790, placed in charge of the collections in Madurai province.

Next year the tribute was increased to Rs. 2,20,000. The Sethupathi could not pay it, and decided to surrender his kingdom to the British by a treaty in 1792. Colonel Martinz was sent to occupy the country. But his powers were confined to indirect control. It was, however, obvious that the British were determined to acquire the land. Three years after taking charge, they framed a number of "charges" against the Sethupathi and deposed him. Thus in 1795 ended the dynasty after having lasted one hundred and ninety years. Muthuramalinga was sent to Madras, where he died in 1801, hardly forty years old.

CHAPTER IV

REBELLIONS

The last stage in the history of the Marava land before Indian independence has given it new life began with the deposition of Muthuramalinga Thevar in 1795, followed by the unfortunate man's premature death six years later. The "charges" the British framed against him were flimsy. One of them was the remarkably vague one that "the Setupati showed a disposition to rebel against the government". The truth was that the British feared the influence of the Sethupathi among the other polegars, of whom, despite quarrels among themselves, he was the head. These chieftains had never accepted willingly any kind of control, Indian or foreign, and it was not to be supposed that they would obey the orders of an alien administration newly arrived in their midst. The chief of Kombai once sent the English Collector a bag of stones in response to a demand for "dues".

The polegars' independent spirit was exemplified in their revolts of 1798 and 1801, now regarded as the "south Indian war of independence". Vira Pandya Kattabomma Nayak was the famous expression of the refusal to accept British overlordship. The polegars' cause was, viewed from this distance of time, a hopeless one from the start. The British had become supreme in southern India after the death of Tippu Sultan in the fourth Mysore war in 1799 and, moreover, there was disunion among the polegars. But that, nevertheless, the patriots thought it worth while to make an attempt, even at extreme cost, testifies to the courage of their convictions.

Mangaleswari Nachiar (the lady was named after the Goddess in the Uttarakosamangai temple, near the capital),

a sister of the deposed Sethupathi ,claimed the succession to his possessions, or the "estate", as they could now be called. In 1795, the year of the extinction of Sethupathi independence, the British recognised her title, but she was not put in possession until eight years later. The company administered the region all these years. It was during this period that the polegars revolted.

The rebellion began in Tirunelveli, spread to Ramanathapuram and finally to Sivaganga. Kattabomman, who became polegar of Panjalamkurichi on February 2, 1790, defied the company, refused to pay taxes, and raided the territories of the company and of the pro-British polegars. When Colonel Maxwell demanded an explanation of his conduct, he refused to meet him. Then Jackson, the Collector of Ramnad, directed him to appear before him on September 9, 1798. Kattabomman did appear, but in a melee that followed a Lieutenant Clark was killed. Then Stephen Lushington, who succeesed Jackson on June 12, 1799, also failed to bring him to terms.

Lushington suggested a punitive expedition against Kattabomman. Major Banneman besieged Panjalamkurichi. Kattabomman fled first to Sivaganga and then to Pudukottai. He and the other fugutives were captured near Kalipur, where they had been hiding, and handed over to the British. A court martial was held in Kayattar, in Tirunelveli district, and on October 17, 1799 Kattabomman was hanged. His two brothers and the chief of Nagalapuram were imprisoned. Lord Clive, then the Governor of Madras, sent the Ruler of Pudukottai a robe of honour, a thoroughbred horse and two thousand gold coins.

The leadership of the revolt now devolved on "Oomaithurai" as Kumaraswami Nayak, a brother of Kattabomman's, was called because he was dumb, and on Subba Nayak, or Sivathaiya, another brother. They had escaped from Palayamakottai pri-

son on February 2, 1801, after more than a year of incarceration. Local ballads describe this incident graphically. "Oomaithurai", as brave as his great brother, was a remarkable individual whom even his enemies admired.

General James Welsh wrote in his "Military Reminiscences" 1830, that he was "one of the most extraordinary mortals I ever knew. He was a tall, slender lad of a very sickly appearance, yet possessing that energy of mind which, in troublous times, always gains pre-eminence; whilst in his case the very defect (being dumb) which would have impeded another proved a great auxiliary in the minds of the ignorant and superstitious idolators. The Oome was adored; his slightest sign was an oracle and every man flew to execute what he had commanded. No Council assembled at which he did not preside; no daring adventure was undertaken which he did not lead".

In less than a month after their escape from prison the two brothers gathered five thousand men and rebuilt Panjalamkurichi fort, "the Gibraltar of the insurgents". As the British were waiting for reinforcements, the patriots captured many forts and also seized Tuticorin. But Lieutenant-Colonel Agnew joined Major Macaulay, the local commander in storming Panjalamkurichi. The defenders fled to Sivaganga, leaving four hundred and fifty dead.

The scene shifted to Sivaganga where the Marudhu brothers were in control. They had already made common cause with the Panjalamkurichi brothers, and when Agnew directed them to hand over "Oomathurai" and his brother they refused. The Mardhus' army now consisted of twenty thousand men. Lieutenant-Colonel Innes arrived from Dindigul with reinforcements, but even so the British army suffered from the harassing guerilla tactics of the insurgents. Then the British called upon the Ruler of Pudukottai to send reinforcements and, after initial hesitation, he complied.

Even so the Marudhus seemed invincible. The British then set out to alienate the Sivaganga zamindar from them. Gowrivallabha was promised a "higher status" and other rewards. The manoeuvres succeeded. The British also tampered with the loyalty of many of the followers of the Marudhu and the Panjalamkurichi brothers. The other insurgents had taken up their position in Kalaiyarkoil. In marching towards it through Siruvayal, the British forces were constantly harassed by flank attacks and sniping. When they captured Siruvayal after a bitter fight, they found it utterly destroyed. The Marudhu brothers were not wholly on the defensive. They not only threatened Ramanathapuram itself but also carried on a small naval war in the Palk Straits.

The British advance on Kalaiyarkoil was bitterly resisted all the way in the thick jungle. Finally, the attack was delivered from three directions under the command of Colonel Innes, Colonel Agnew and Colonel Spray. The fort fell on October 1, 1801. Subsequently the Marudhu and the surviving Panjalamkurichi brothers were executed. Seventy of their associates were transported. But the story of the Kalaiyarkoil fight is a stirring one and is commemorated in many a popular ballad.

The fall of Kalaiyarkoil marked the end of the polegar wars that had intermittently lasted half a century. Lushington, now the Collector of Tirunelveli, "settled" the subjugated region which included not only Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga but also Dindigul, Madurai and Tirunelveli. The "palayams" were regrouped into "zamindaris", and the polegars, deprived of ruling powers, became "zamindars". All the forts in the area were demolished, and all weapons of war confiscated. Tirumayam fort, near Pudukottai, perhaps suffered the least from the destruction. It is still a landmark on its hill overlooking a tank and standing above two historic excavated rock temples.

Ramanathapuram became a zamindari in 1803. On Rani Mangaleswari Nachiar was imposed a tribute, or "peshcash", of Rs 3, 24, 404-3-10. She had no political powers and could enter into no diplomatic relations with other rulers. The British agent said in a despatch to the Madras Government on March 12, 1803, "I particularly desired the Ranee to reflect upon the circumstances which led to her present elevation and that in recollecting the fate of her brother, who had forfeited his right to the situation she was now called upon to fill she must, at the same time be conscious that the Governor in Council (Clive) had been solely actuated by a sense of the justice of her claims thereto and a full reliance in her good disposition to prove deserving of this distinguished mark of His Lordship's favour". Again, "In order that she might fully comprehend the benefit which the execution of this system would confer on her, I explained the principles of the new arrangements in the fullest manner by stating that her country would be secured to her under a Sunnud beyond power of any person to take any part of it from her. The assessment she was fixed to pay was fixed for ever and, however extensive might be the fruits of her own good management and industry, no increase would be demanded from her or from her children".

The Rani, who lived for four years after the installation, was a lady of piety and charity. She endowed the Chokkanathaswami temple and the Perumal temple, near Tiruppullani, and also the Sambandar matha in Madurai. When she died in 1807, her adopted son, Annaswami, succeeded her by the terms of her will. He assumed the name of Vijaya Ragunatha Sethupathi.

What followed was an era of expensive litigation. Vijaya Raghunatha being a minor, the management of the zamindari was in the hands of the Pradhani, Thyagaraja Pillai. After the Sethupathi attained majority, Sivakami Nachiar, a daughter of Muthuramalinga Sethupathi, filed a suit assailing the legitimacy

of Annaswami's succession. The court decided in her favour and handed the estate over to her. But she allowed the "peshcush" to fall into arrears, and the estate was taken over by the court.

Further litigation followed. Vijaya Raghunatha died in 1820 leaving an adopted son, Ramaswami Thevar. The former's widow, Muthu Veerayi Nachiar, claimed the estate on Ramaswami's behalf. This was conceded in 1829. But Ramaswami died the same year, his widow, Parvathavardhani, and two daughters, Mangaleswari Nachiar and Dorairaja Nachiar, surviving him. On behalf of Mangaleswari Nachiar, Vijaya Raghunatha's widow, Muthu Veeray Nachiar, and his brother, Muthuchella Thevar, managed the estate. But both the daughters of Ramaswami died at an early age. In the meanwhile, Muthuchella Thevar was charged with mismanagement and the Court of Wards took over the estate. In 1846 the British accepted Parvathavardhani, Ramaswami's widow, as the successor. She held the field despite many cases against her claim.

To continue the complicated story, Parvatavardhani was in charge of the estate for sixteen years till 1862, when she passed away. In 1857 she had adopted a nephew, Muthuramalinga Thevar, as her successor. The East India Company declared the adoption invalid, but later upheld it. Still, two relations challenged Muthuramalinga Thevar's title in the Privy Council in London. In 1868 it upheld his claim. Pending the judgment, Muthuramalinga Thevar became Sethupathi in 1862. By this time the Indian War of Independence in the north had been fought, and the British Crown had succeeded the East India Company.

Mutburamalinga Thevar had to pay heavy legal bills and he was unable to remit the "peshcush" which fell into large arrears. In 1871 the estate came under Lee Warner as Special

Assistant Collector. When, on February 21, Muthuramalinga Sethupathi died, the Court of Wards assumed control of the estate. The British Government granted a loan to the estate management to help it pay off the revenue arrears. In 1876 and the following year the estate was afflicted first by drought and then by floods. In 1879 the arrears of revenue and loan were Rs 14,42,830. The Government now appointed Indian officers holding that the appointment of Europeans was too costly. Raja Rama Rao managed the estate. He later wrote the "Ramnad Manual", one of the sources of information on the history of this complicated period. In 1889, Bhaskaraswami Sethupathi, the first son of Muthuramalinga, attained his majority and was installed. Rama Rao's management was so effective that there was a surplus of three and a half lakhs of rupees in the treasury. There were also more than two and a half lakhs of rupees of Devasthanam funds.

Bhaskaraswami was a personality in the Indian Renaissance, though he was at the helm of affairs only for fourteen years, till 1903, when he passed away. Though his measures were subject to the Madras Government, he revived at least the old cultural glory. The Navaratri festival was celebrated with splendour as of old. The Sethupathi was a particular patron of music, and his Ramalinga Vilas palace resounded to many a great concert. Maha Vaidyanatha Aiyar, "Poochi" Iyengar and Patnam Subramania Aiyar were among those who received a fillip from the Sethupathi. The court also attracted a large number of Tamil and Sanskrit scholars.

Of great piety, the Sethupathi renovated and made large grants to a number of temples. Well read in the scriptures, he could deliver religious discourses. He was the first Sethupathi to learn English, having had an English tutor. "He wrote and spoke like an Englishman". His qualities are best summed up in a tribute T. Venkaswami Rao, a Dewan of his for a time, paid him.

"The Raja was a man of great natural ability and he possessed great natural shrewdness. He had passed the F.A. examination. He wrote and spoke English with remarkable facility. He was also a good Tamil scholar. He was altogether an accomplished man. He was a man of great liberality. He was a patron of literary men, artists and musicians. He used to give such people large presents. He spent huge sums as 'danams'. He gave rich presents to Pandits and musicians. In these matters the Raja had a will of his own and spent from borrowed funds".

But the most remarkable tribute comes from no less a person than Swami Vivekananda. It was the Sethupathi who made possible his visit to Chicago to attend the World Conference of Religions, a turning point in the modern history of Hinduism. The Swamiji himself said that it was the Sethupathi who "conceived the idea of my going to Chicago. It was he that put the idea into my head and persistently urged me to accomplish it. I wish there were half a dozen more such Rajas to take interest in our dear motherland and work for her amelioration in the spiritual line".

On another occasion the Swamiji wrote, "Here yon have a man than whom there is no more zealous Hindu through out the length and breadth of this land; here you have a prince than whom there is no prince in this land better informed in all affairs, oriental or occidental. Here he is harmonised, taking from every nation whatever he can that is good".

The Swamiji's first visit after his return from the United States was to Ramanathapuram. The Sethupathi accorded him a splendid reception in Pamban' He said in an address presented to him, "We truly rejoice to see that your Holiness' efforts in sowing the seeds of Hindu philosophy in the cultured minds of the great western nations are being crowned with so much success that all round we see the bright and

cheerful aspect of excellent fruits in great abundance and most humbly pray that your Holiness will, during your sojourn in Aryavartha, be graciously pleased to exert even a little more than what you did in the west to awaken the minds of your brethren in this your motherland from the dreary life-long slumber and make them recall in their minds the long forgotten gospel of truth."

A monument in Ramanathapuram commemorates the Swamiji's visit. It carries the following inscription, "Satyameva Jayathi. This monument erected by Bhaskara Sethupathi, the Raja of Ramnad, marks the sacred spot where His Holiness Swami Vivekananda's blessed feet trod on Indian soil together with the English disciples of His Holiness' after his return from the Western Hemisphere where glorious and unprecedented success attended His Holiness philanthropic labours to spread the religion of Vedanta."

Bhaskara was succeeded by Rajarajeswara Sethupathi, also called Muthuramalinga Sethupathi, in 1903. He was then a minor and till he attained majority in 1910 the estate was under the management of lessees. After 1911, when they surrendered possession, Muthuramalinga was in full control. He was a great patron of Tamil scholarship, music and the dance. The first world war raged during his stewardship, and he aided the Allies' war effort.

Sri Shanmuga Rajeswara Sethupathi succeeded Muthuramalinga in 1928. He was an accomplished man of the world. He served as a minister in Mr. C. Rajagopalachari's cabinet formed in 1952. It resigned two years later. The Raja was a splendid sportsman. He represented the State in the Ranji trophy cricket tournament and was also an able tennis player.

The present Sethupathi, Sri Ramanatha, is of a pious disposition. He takes great interest in the renovation and main-

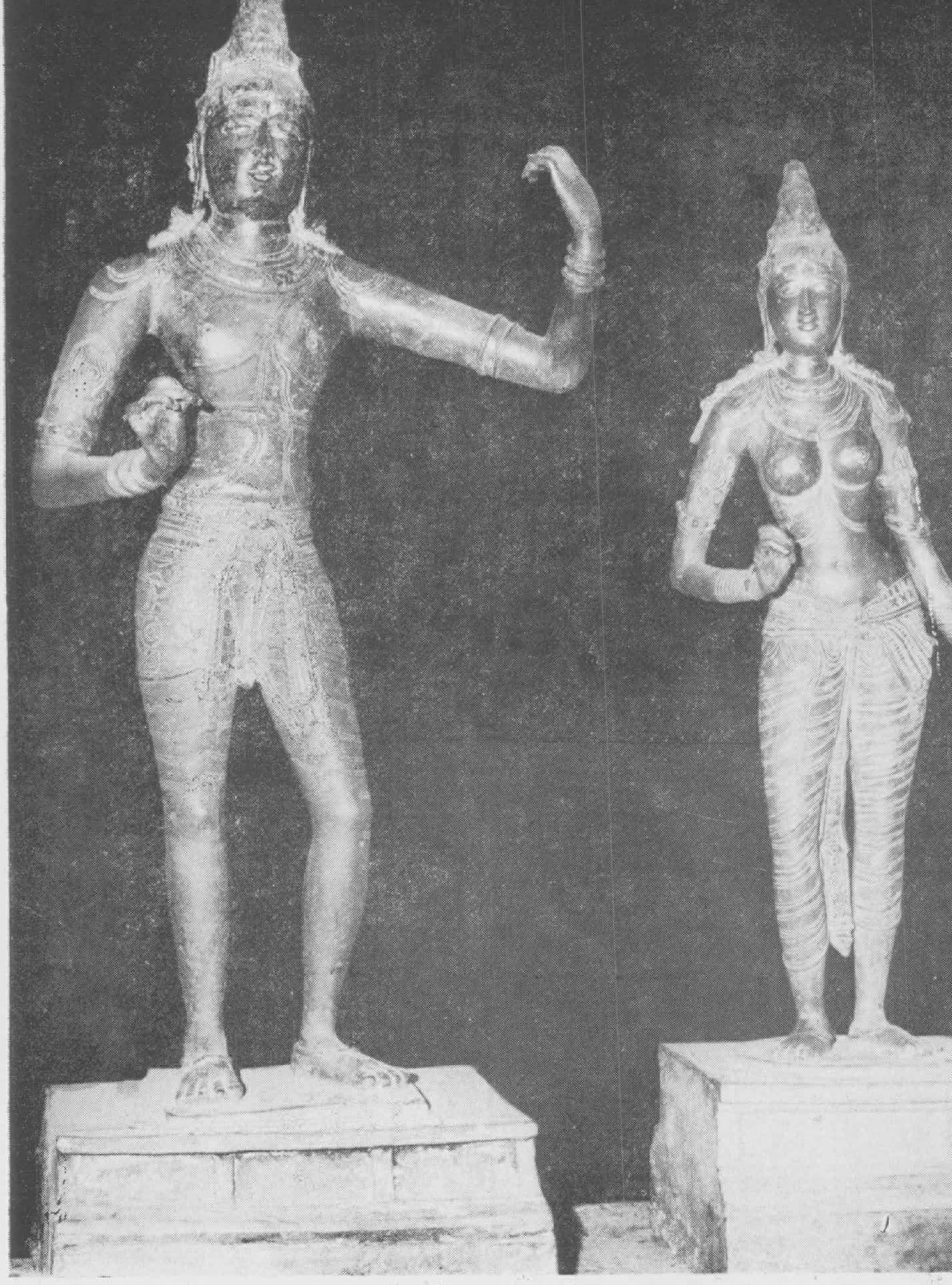
tenance of the many famous temples in the district with which he is hereditarily connected.

The history of the district has, since Sadaika came to power in 1604 to become the first historical Sethupathi, been one mainly of this dynasty and of related Sivaganga, with the annals of another offshoot, Pudukottai, added. But there is also administrative history to record since the beginning of the nineteenth century, some aspects of which have already been referred to.

This history may be said to begun on July 31, 1801, when the Nawab of the Carnatic handed over full power to the East India Company in all his territories, including the area forming the present Ramanathapuram district. Lushington was the "Collector of Tinnevelly and the Maravars" that year. Two years later the 'Zilla of Ramnad' was formed and Parish appointed its Collector. His responsibility included the zamins of Sivaganga and Tirunelveli and the districts of Madurai and Dindigul. Another change was made in 1808 when the 'Zilla of Ramnad' was abolished, and the Tirunelveli zamins, of which there were twenty-five, were incorporated in the district of the same name.

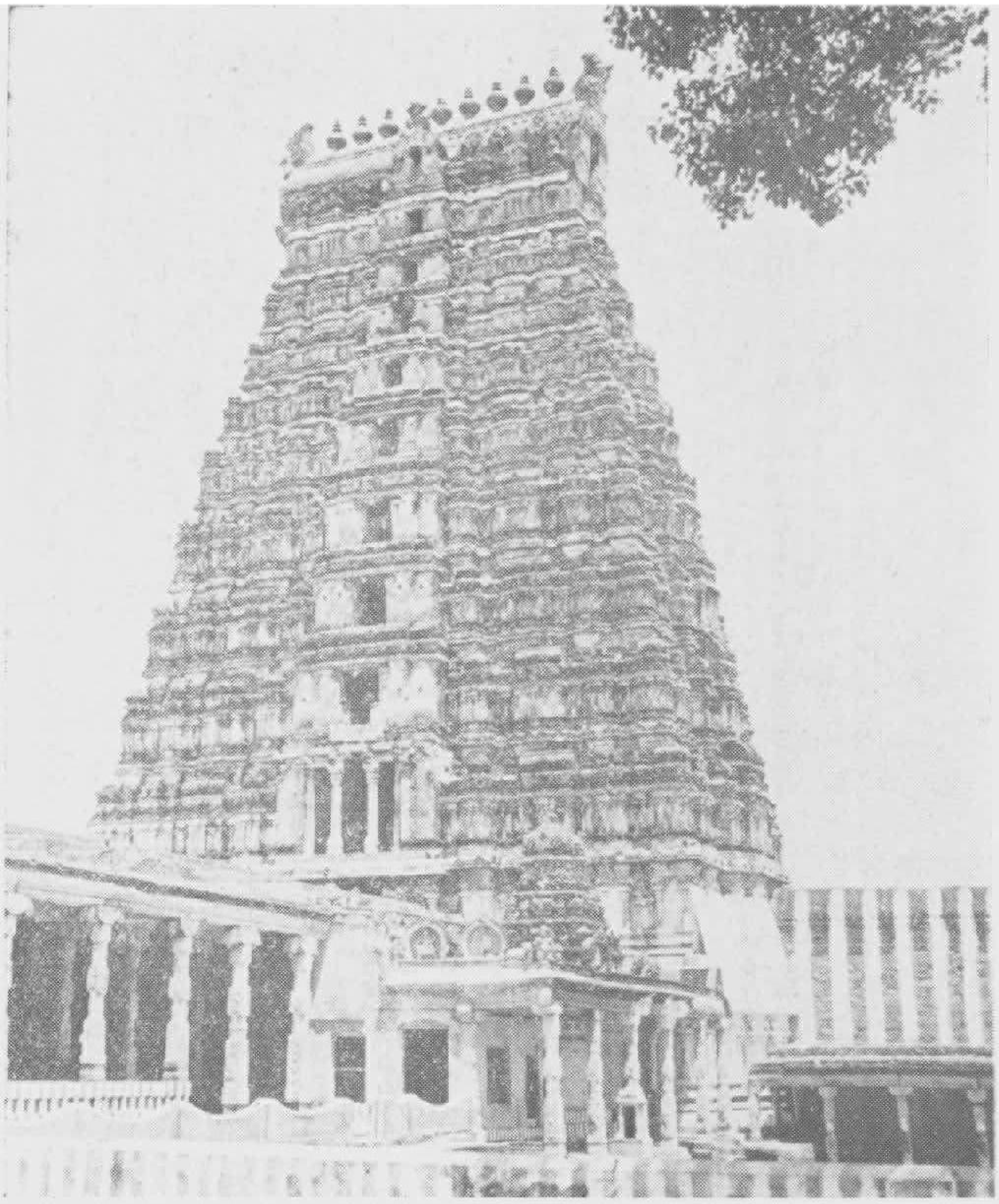
Earlier, in 1802, Lushington had proposed a settlement of the southern polegar regions. It was accepted next year, and the twenty-five polegars became zamindars, having received deeds of permanent settlement. Six of these zamindaris were Ramanathapuram estates, Sattur, Koilpatti, Mannarkottai, Sennalgudi, Pavali and Kollankondan. These six were added to Ramanathapuram district when it was created in 1910.

In 1902, the Government asked Sir William Meyer, of the Indian Civil Service, to report on redividing the districts. The old Madurai district, with an area of 8,700 square miles and a population of three million, was too big for one official to

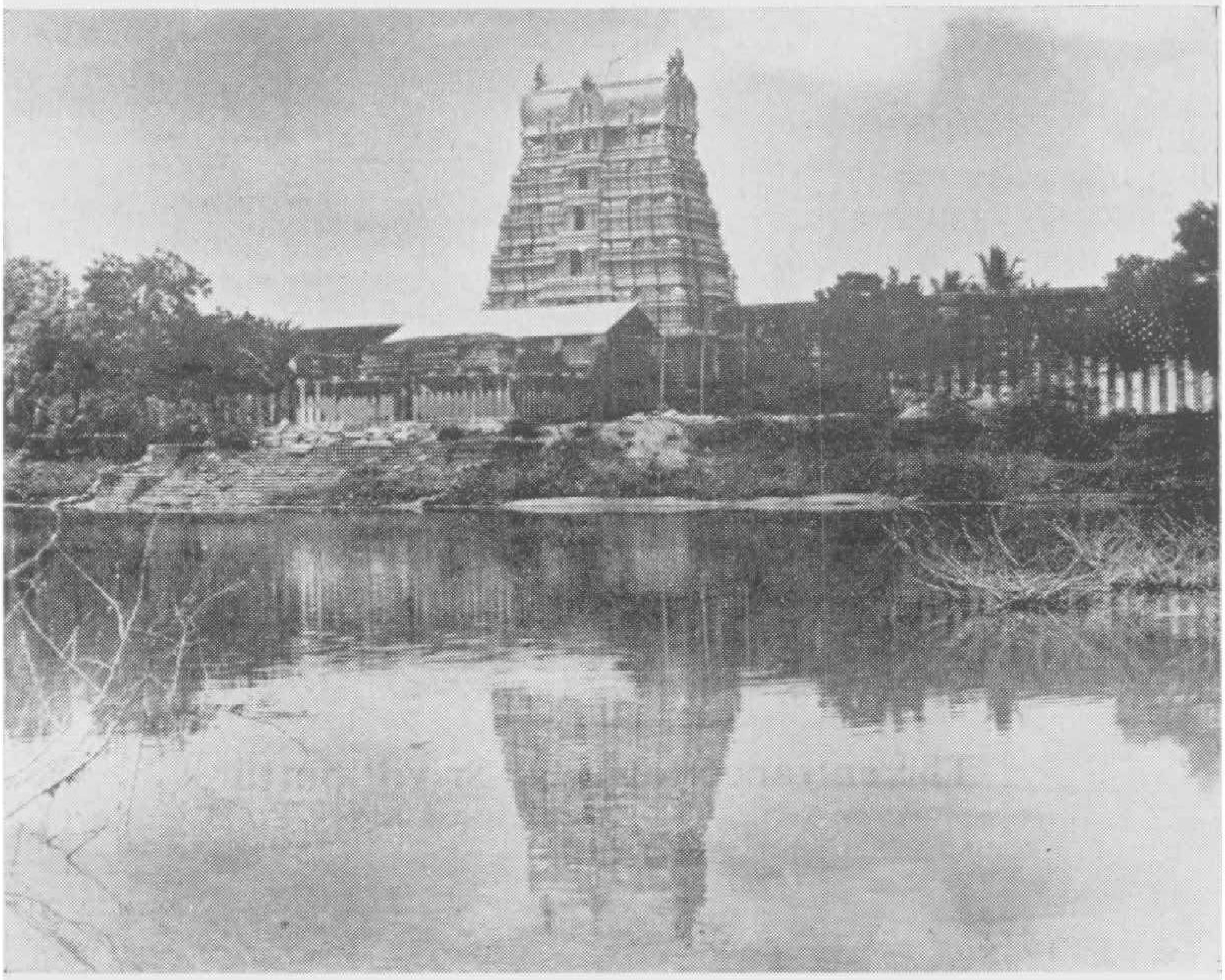


Rama and Sita—Bronze—in the collection of Thiruttalinatha temp
Thiruppattur 10th cent. A.D.

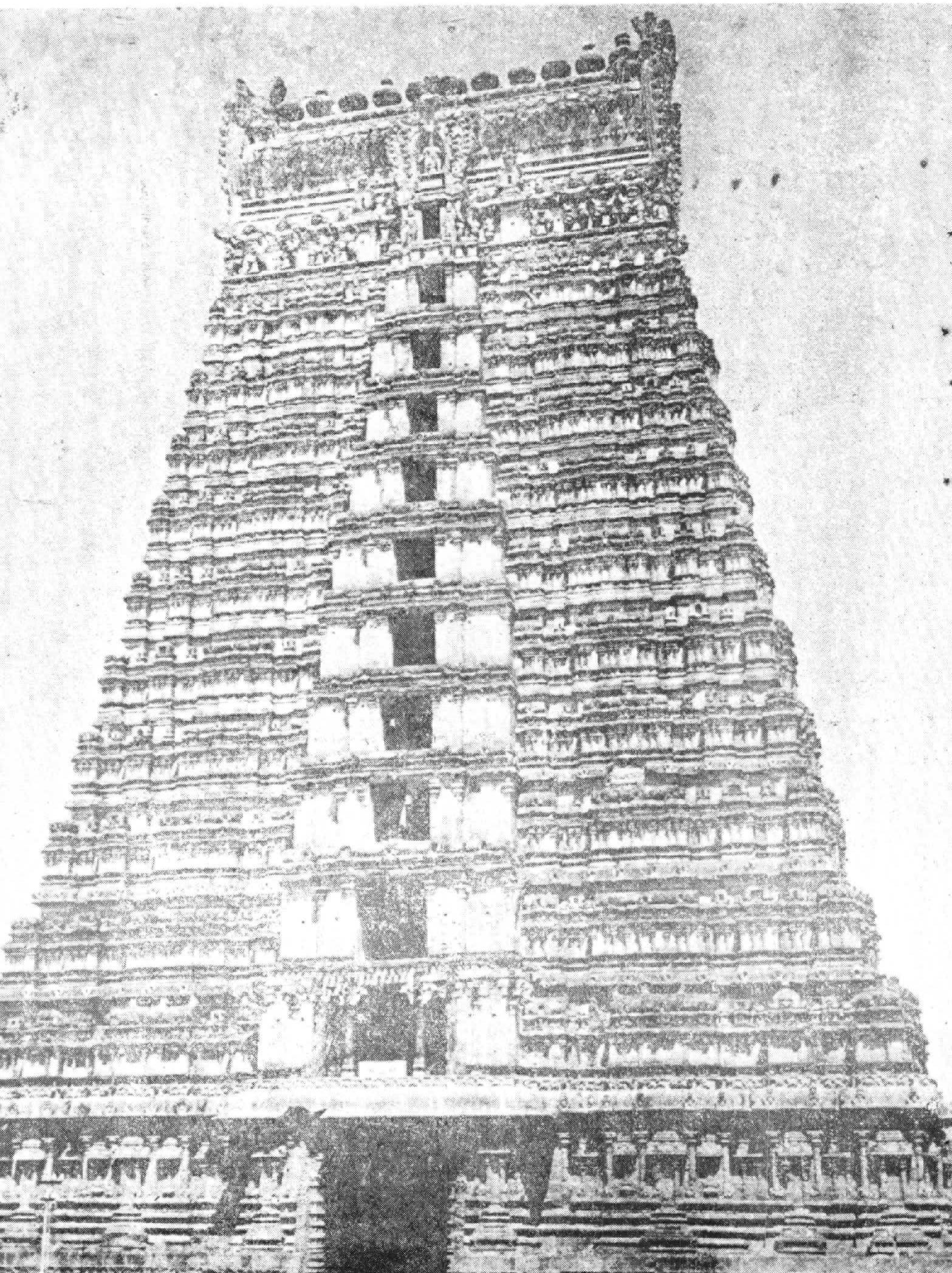
A bronze image of Nataraja in the collection of Sivaganga Devasthanam—11th cent. A.D.



Thiruvadanai temple

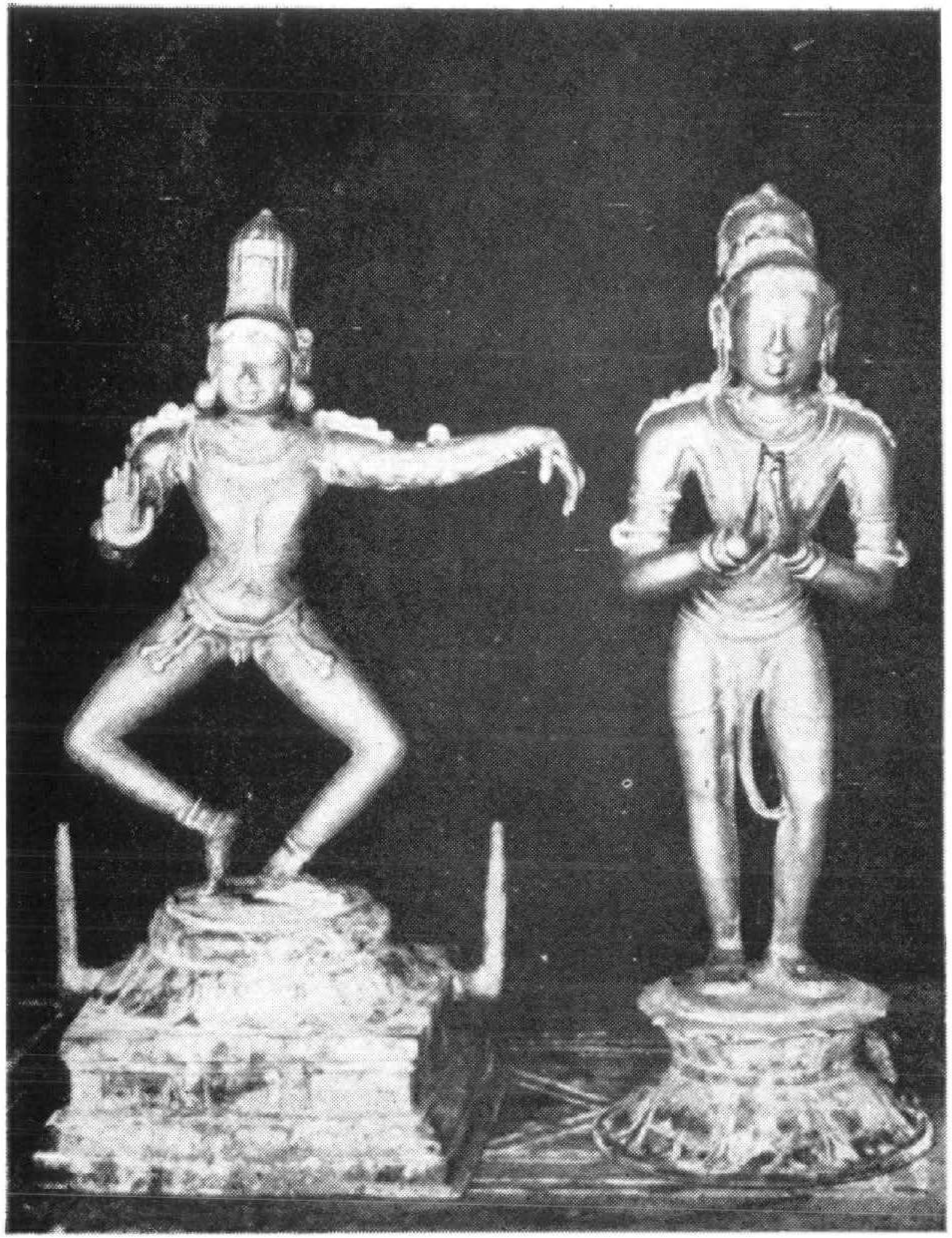


Thiruppullani temple



The entrance tower at Srivilliputtur.

The prakara under construction—Uttarakosamangai



Thirujnanasambandar and Candikeswarar — Manickkavasaka

Bronze images — Uttarakosamangai — 11-12th century A.D.

Muthu Vijaya Raghunatha sethupathi receiving the royal sceptre from goddess Rajarajesvari—Mural painting.

Muthu Vijaya Raghunatha sethupathi receiving the blessings of Lord Vishnu—Mural painting.

Muthu Vijaya Raghunatha Sethupathi as a hunter with his consorts.
Mural painting in the Ramalinga Vilas palace in Ramanathapuram.

administer. But it was only in 1910, after long years of reporting and discussions, that Ramanathapuram district was formed. One of the objections to the scheme was that the region lacked railway communications. It was decided for this reason that the Collector and the District Judge of the new district should have their headquarters in Madurai.

The district was mainly a zamindari area, Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga occupying seven out of the nine taluks. In 1947 an Act was adopted making the rent the ryot had to pay the zamindar the same as that paid in a Government village. Next year the Madras Estates (Abolition and Conversion into Ryotwari) Act eliminated the zamindari system altogether with compensation. This revolutionary enactment has changed the ethos of Ramanathapuram agriculture and life itself, as in similar other areas in the district.

CHAPTER V

TONDAIMANS OF PUDUKOTTAI

Though the history of the Tondaiman rulers of the erstwhile Pudukottai State does not properly belong to Ramanathapuram's annals, it is expedient to add it here because that dynasty branched off from the house of the Sethupathis.

There are some legendary stories about the origin of the Tondaimans. According to one of these, a variant of the story relating to the origin of the Kallars as a whole, Indra once met a maiden on earth. . He married her and had many sons, one of whom became a king. From him descended a line of successors, the fifteenth of whom was Raya Tondaiman.

Historically, the Tondaimans migrated from Tondaimandalam. They were a tribe of Kallars which lived on the hills near Tirupati. They were famous as captors of wild elephants. One of them, Tondaiman Chakravarthi, settled down in Ambukovil which is called Alumbil in old Tamil literature. According to the epigraphs of the early Tondaiman rulers, they belonged to Indra's race and Kasyapa's sept.

The Tondaimans became politically powerful in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Their rise is attributed to an incident in which Avadai Raghunatha of Karambakkudi, one of the nine settlements of the Kallars, figured. He captured a runaway elephant of Sriranga, the Raya of Vijayanagar, who was then visiting southern Tamilnad. Raghunatha tamed it with great skill and conducted it to the Raya. Pleased with this exploit, the Raya conferred on him the title of "Raya Rahutta Raya Vajridu Raya Mannidu Raya". Ever afterwards

the Tondaiman was called "Raya Tondaiman". Besides the title, the Raya gave him some lands and many signs of distinction.

Raya Tondaiman had four sons, named Raghunatha, Namana, Paccai and Perama, and a daughter of the name of Kattali. The first son, born in 1641, succeeded to his father's estates twenty years later. Vijayaraghava, the Tanjore Nayak, found him useful in curbing lawlessness on the pilgrim road to Rameswaram. Raghunatha rose high in service and received many marks of royal favour until, it is said, finding that the Nayak was becoming a bigoted Vaishnavaite, he, a Saivaite himself, renounced his service and returned home.

Soon after Raghunatha rendered valuable services to Ranga Krishna Muthu Virappa, the Nayak of Madurai, in defending the Tiruchi fort from a siege. His reward was a high position in the State and the post of "Arasu Kavalkar" of Tiruchi.

It was after this that Kizhavan Sethupathi invited Raghunatha and his brother, Namana to his capital and employed them in his army. The brothers subdued a number of chieftains who were troubling the Sethupathi. In addition, Raghunatha performed two feats, the defeat of the chieftain of Ettayapuram and the capture of the State elephant of the Nayak of Tanjore, who was then fighting the Sethupathi.

The ties between the Tondaiman and the Sethupathi were strengthened when the latter fell in love with Kattalai, the former's sister, and married her. Ultimately, the Sethupathi gave his brother-in-law a tract of land and installed him as ruler with his capital in Tirumayam. The story is that the Sethupathi summoned to his camp in Kalaiyarkoil Seventelunta, a Pallavarayar, who had assumed the title of Raja and was ruling a small region to the south of the Vellar as his feudatory.

When the Sethupathi's messengers came to the Pallavarayar's camp in Kandadevi, he was engaged in worship and could not set out at once. This angered Kizhavan who directed his son to march on Kandadevi and destroy the Pallavarayar. The young Sethupathi seized the Pallavarayar in Kandadevi, and the latter killed himself

According to some historians, it is probable that what the Sethupathi gave the Tondaiman was only some land to the south of the Vellar. The bigger area to the north of the river, then under the Pallavarayar, he might have acquired with the help of the Sethupathi's forces.

Raghunatha's reign was filled with wars. Fighting for Mangammal, the Queen Regent of Madurai, he defeated the Raja of Travancore, who had withheld his tribute to Madurai. This success occurred in 1698. After helping the Regent drive away the Mysore forces which were besieging Tiruchi, Raghunatha performed a signal service to Madurai in its dispute with Tanjore over lands near Tirukkattupalli. This area was vital to the Tanjore kingdom because the Grand Anicut, located nearby, controls irrigation by the Cauvery and its many tributaries. The Tondaiman conqured this strategic region for Madurai. Soon after he repulsed an attack by Naloji Pant, a Tanjore general.

The Tanjore Raja thereupon stirred up trouble for the Tondaiman in his own State. Making an alliance with Tiruvudaiya, who had succeeded Kizhavan in Ramanathapuram, and inducing him to send an army to attack Pudukottai, he despatched a large force of his own against the common enemy. But the Tondaiman, helped by his five sons, engaged the combined armies in Peraiyur, defeated them, and killed the Sethupathi general.

Proceeding from success to success, the Tondaiman next subjugated four chieftains who had withheld their tribute to

Madurai. By this time he had become powerful in Tiruchi. But the Nayak's prime minister had him expelled from the court.

The Tondaiman profited from the civil war in the Sethupathi family in 1723. Before this he had helped the Tanjavur Raja who was aiming at the recovery of Arantangi and some other regions which Kizhavan had wrested from him. The hostile armies met in Arantangi. The actions were indecisive, but an epidemic decimated the Sethupathi's force and the Sethupathi himself succumbed to it shortly after he had been brought to his capital.

Thanda Thevar, appointed his successor by Kizhavan, faced a challenge from Bhavani Sankar. Thanda sought the help of the Madurai Nayak and of the Tondaiman, promising the latter the districts of Tirumayam and Kizhanilai. With their assistance he besieged his rival in Arantangi. Bhavani Sankar gave up the fight and fled to Tanjavur. Tirumayam was added to the Tondaiman State.

The Tondaiman's last conquests were at the expense of the Sethupathis, that house being racked by civil war. He died in 1730. The founder of the State, he was a brave and successful warrior.

Raghunatha nominated Vijaya Raghunatha, his eldest grandson, as his successor. But Paccai, his brother, disputed the succession. He was, however, defeated in a battle near Kudumiyamalai and finally taken prisoner.

Vijaya Raghunatha played a part in the civil war which broke out in the Madurai kingdom following Ranga Krishna Chokkanatha's death without issue in 1731. Bangaru Tirumalai, a cousin of the Nayak, opposed his nominee, Minakshi, one of his queens. The Tondaiman supported Bangaru Tirumalai. Chanda Sahib, ostensibly helping the queen, once occupied

Pudukottai, destroying the palace and plundering the treasury. There followed another invasion, this time by Ananda Rao, a general of the Tanjavur Raja, who was a supporter of the queen. Ananda Rao occupied almost the whole of the Tondaiman's territory, but his siege of Tirumayam collapsed and he had to retreat to Tanjavur to fight other enemies. The Tondaiman returned to his capital in October, 1734, after an absence of about fifteen months.

It was in this reign that Pudukottai State assumed the size it retained until it was merged in the Indian Union after independence except for Kizhanilai, which was added in 1803. Another addition was the Kolattur region which had first come under the rule of Namana, the brother of Raghunatha, the first Raja of Pudukottai. The Kolattur dynasty numbered two rulers after Namana, Ramaswami and Namana II. The latter was of weak mind. He had a son by a concubine, and he directed the chief men of the principality to treat him as his heir apparent. Disgusted, they appealed to the Tondaiman in Pudukottai to take Kolattur over. This he did sometime between 1740 and 1750.

Tondaiman forces distinguished themselves in the wars of the time. The Tondaiman supported the Marathas against Chanda Sahib, and once he captured the Tiruchi fort. About the end of 1743 he met the Nizam of Hyderabad in an interview.

The Carnatic wars centred around the Tiruchi fort which, held by the English for their client, Muhammad Ali, was besieged by the French and Chanda Sahib, the rival claimant to the Arcot throne. The fighting was mainly a number of skirmishes fought with the object of supplying the fort with provisions on the one hand and preventing this on the other. The Tondaiman allied himself with the British and was of great help to them.

The chief events were a battle in Golden Rock, near Tiruchi, in July. 1753, and a skirmish two months later. The Tondaiman's friendship with the English and their protege brought on his head reprisals by the French and the Mysoreans, who were allied with them at this time. In May, 1754, a French force attacked his territory, but could do little damage. About this time, the Nawab of Arcot, who claimed suzerainty over what is now southern Tamilnad and was able to enforce it from time to time, exempted the Tondaiman from tribute.

When the Seven Years' War broke out in Europe in May, 1756, the English and the French came to blows in India. Again, the Tondaiman actively helped the English not only in and around Tiruchi, which continued to be a bone of contention, but also in Madras which Lally, the French general, besieged from December, 1758, to February, 1759. By April, 1761, the war ended decisively in favour of the English. The French lost every one of their possessions in southern India.

A menacing enemy arose in the person of Hyder Ali. The Tondaiman continued to support the English against him. Enraged at this, Hyder Ali's forces ravaged Pudukottai State.

The Tondaiman died towards the end of 1769. He had consolidated the State which his predecessor had founded. He had for spiritual preceptor no less a sage than Sadasiva Brahmendra. He is believed to have met him about 1738. When he asked for spiritual instruction, the sage wrote the "Dakshinamurthi mantra" on an area of sand. He asked the Tondaiman to accept Mahabashyam Gopalakrishna Sastri as his "guru".

The next Tondaiman was Raghunatha, who ruled for twenty years from 1769. He continued his father's policy of support to the English in the wars that continued throughout his reign. The first event occurred when the Nawab went to war with the Raja of Tanjavur. The Tondaiman army

captured Vallam. When, next, the Nawab wished to subjugate Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga, the Tondaiman sent him a force in support. The Ramanathapuram fort was captured, and a little later, so was Sivaganga. Subsequently, when the Nawab wished to annex Tanjavur, the Tondaiman sent a force to assist him. The Tanjavur fort fell in September, 1773.

The next event was the Nawab's effort to claim Nagore, near Negapatam, which the Raja of Tanjavur had given to the Dutch in payment for a debt of his to them. The Tondaiman sent a force to help the Nawab, but fighting was averted with the Dutch relinquishing the territory for payment of money by the Nawab.

A great challenge to English power in the south occurred when Hyder Ali invaded the Carnatic in July, 1780. Every power in the region turned hostile to the English and the Nawab, but Pudukottai held firm by the English alliance. Hyder Ali's forces, after overrunning Tanjavur, entered Tondaiman country near Adankottai, but were repulsed by Manna Velar, a Tondaiman general, in 1781. Hyder's forces also entered the State from the Tiruchi side, but the Tondaiman turned them away in Malampatti. Taking the offensive, the Pudukottai forces captured the fortresses of Kizhanilai, Arantangi and Pattukottai.

In 1782, when Tippu Sultan succeeded his father, he made an attempt to induce the Tondaiman to join him. The attempt failed. When the third Mysore war broke out next year, the Tondaiman sent a force which captured Karur, Dindigul, and Palghat.

Six years later, in 1789, the Tondaiman was asked to help the English in a campaign against Sivaganga, then ruled by the Marudhu brothers. In June Kalaiyarkoil, the Sivaganga

TAMIL NADU STATE DEPARTMENT ... MADRAS

stronghold, fell. Chinna Marudhu retired for a time into forests but returned soon after.

This Tondaiman was succeeded in 1789 by a cousin, Vijaya Raghunatha. During Vijaya Raghunatha's reign, which lasted till 1807, striking changes occurred. Tanjavur was annexed by the English in 1799 and the Carnatic of the Nawab two years later. Moreover, Tippu fell in 1799. The English became supreme in south India. But before the era of wars ended there was still a decade of fighting to go. The two so called "Poligar wars", in which Kattabomman and the Marudhu brothers distinguished themselves, were fought during this period and a little after.

First, Tondaiman forces helped the Nawab against the poligars of Udayarpalayam and Ariyalur. Then, in 1799, a Pudukottai force was sent to assist the English in the siege of Seringapatam, Tippu's capital, in the fourth Mysore war. But it arrived a week late.

Kattabomman, the chieftain of Panchalamkurichi, evacuated his stronghold when an English force attacked him in August, 1799 and fled first to Sivaganga and then to the forests in Tondaiman country. At the request of the English, he was seized "in the jungle of the village of Kaliapoor". He was subsequently hanged. The Tondaiman assisted the English in the second "Poligar war" in 1801. With this the era of fighting ended in south India. An indirect result of the Tondaiman's consistent support to the English was that the latter ceded him the fort and district of Kizhanilai in 1803.

Vijaya Raghunatha died in 1807 and was succeeded by his two sons in turn. The nineteenth century was an era of peace and reforms in the State. With the disappearance of the Nawab of the Carnatic, Pudukottai entered into direct relations with the supreme power.

Vijaya Raghunatha Raya Tondaiman, the elder son of his predecessor, ruled from 1807 to 1825. He was only ten years old when he ascended the throne, and Blackburne, the British Resident of Tanjavur, was placed in charge of the State. The history of this reign is a story of reforms introduced chiefly by Blackburne. He made arrangements for the better collection of land revenue and established courts of justice. The first school was opened in 1813. In the same year the State was surveyed. About this time too the State accounts began to be kept in Marathi.

The Tondaiman was invested with full powers in 1817. But before that, in 1809, heavy rains breached many tanks, and in 1812 the capital was destroyed by fire. The town was rebuilt with streets laid in squares around the Raja's palace, the construction of which was completed in 1818.

When Vijaya Raghunatha Raya died in 1825, he was succeeded by his brother, Raghunatha. During this reign, which lasted till 1839, land customs were abolished. An attempt was made to bring Cauvery water to the State, but it was given up on the ground that it would be costly.

The next Tondaiman, Ramachandra, was nine years old when his father passed away, and a regency was set up. When the Tondaiman attained majority, he introduced a number of reforms in the administration, utilising the surplus in the treasury. He improved roads and tanks, built choultries, and abolished monopolies except that over the making of earth salt. A hospital was opened in the capital in 1851.

There was a kind of revolt by Venkannan Servaikar and some other disgruntled elements. The British Government sent a military force in 1854 to quell the disturbances. Following this, the Raja's administrative powers were curtailed.

A. Seshiah Sastri was the first of the Dewans who administered the State on excellent principles. He took office in 1878. His reforms included the abolition the "amanai" system of settling the revenue on lands under which the ryot was only a tenant at will so that those who held them on this tenure became their owners subject to the payment of a fixed assessment, the reorganisation of the Devasthanam Department, the opening of a girls' school in the capital, and the encouragement of primary education. "For the first time in the history of Pudukota (in 1883) there was literally no room in the Treasury for the money that had accumulated in it".

The history of modern Pudukottai may be said to have begun with the reign of Martanda Bhairava Tondaiman, who ascended the throne in 1886 at the age of eleven. Seshiah Sastri was Regent for eight years. During this period the administrative gains of the preceding epoch were consolidated. The most important reform related to the "enfranchisement" of military and other tenures, which amounted to more than 3,00,000 acres. The judiciary system was changed in tune which modern concepts.

In 1902 a far reaching reform was introduced when a Representative Assembly was set up. It consisted of thirty members, all nominated. Primary education was extended on modern lines with primary schools being opened in all important villages.

The Raja decided in 1922 to reside permanently out of India, and a Regent was appointed in Vijaya Raghunatha Dorai Raja. Two years later the Regent inaugurated the State Legislative Council.

When the Tondaiman died in Paris in 1928, the Government of India chose Rajagopala Tondaiman as his successor. Sir

Alexander Tottenham, who was the Administrator, left a deep impress on the administration of the State.

When the State acceded to the Indian Union in 1948-49, a new chapter opened in the history of the people. It was originally administered as part of Tiruchi district, but a new district, with Pudukottai town as headquarters, has been set up.

PLACES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

Aruppukkottai

The ancient name of Aruppukkottai was Sengatturukkai Idattuvali in Venbiḷ Nādu. The Sundaresvara temple in the village was called in ancient times as Kuralmānisvaram Udaiyār. The Kuralmānisvaram Udaiyār temple was in existence from 12th century A.D. In the beginning of 13th century, during the reign of Māravarman Sundarapāndya, many new images were set up, and the temple assumed great importance.

An image named Inakkunalla Perumāl, a stone image of goddess and a processional image of the goddess were set up in 1227 A.D. and a certain Cholagangan gifted lands for offerings to these images. It is stated that, while the right of cultivating these lands belonged to certain persons who were donors, the taxes accruing on them were paid to the temple. The rate at which the taxes were to be paid was fixed at 3 *kalam* on each mā, of land or one half of what prevailed in other Devadāna lands. In doing so, the crops of full yield alone were taken into consideration those who had sustained damages or failure being excluded. In 1225 A.D, a person from South Ceylon (Ten Ilangai,) consecrated an image of Goddess Pārvati, named *Aruntavam Cheyda Nāchiyār*. The donor, whose name was Segal Sevagttevan was living in a street called Vikrama Pāndya Perunteru. He consecrated also another image of Lingapurānadevar (Lingodhbhava). In 1231 A.D. an image of Durgaiyār was set up in the temple.

In the reign of the same ruler Sundara, a Ganesa temple in the village was very popular. The name of the god is given Eduttaduvaiya Pillaiyār. Gifts were made to the temple and the authorities were permitted to receive pay ment in paddy or *dramma*. It is interesting that even in the 13th century the term *dramma* was a valid currency in the Pāndya country. In the Siva temple, a certain Alagan Arulāl-apperumāl, called Ulaganārāyana Chakravarti instituted a special sandhi worship after his title, in the year 1219 A.D. It is not known whether the Ganesa temple refered to above was a secondary shrine in the main Siva temple or an independent temple in the village.

There seems to have existed a separate temple dedicated to Vishnu in the village which is now probably used as an Amman Shrine. In the Vālavanda Amman Shrine of the, village there is an inscription dated 1168 A.D. (S. 1090), which states that one Solagangan, set up the god Alagiya Ālwār. In the reign of Kulasekhara (13th century) the temple continued to receive benefactions. However the diety now in the temple is goddess Vālavanda Ammai. The diety is reffered to in a 17th century record of the village. In 1664 A.D., the village of Bommakottai was gifted for worship of the goddess Vālavanda Ammai, by Tampi Udaiyadevar, an agent of Thirumalai Sethupati Kātta Raghunāthadeva. The gift was made for the merit of Sethupathi. The record is found in a field two miles away from the village. Two points of interest are gleaned from this record. 1) That the goddess Vālavanda Amman was popular even from 17th century A.D. 2) The name of the village Idattuvali has changed into Aruppukkottai in 17th century A.D.

In the year 1193 A.D., Arulāla Alagapperumāl, son of Thiruvālavāyudaiyān Cholagangan, constructed the tank (*Uruni*) of that village. In 1232 A.D., a well was constructed in the village.

It is believed that the fort Aruppukottai, was constructed by Virappanāyak of Madurai who ruled from 1572-1598 A.D. Probably, the new name Aruppukkottai was given to this village during that period.

Chaturvedimangalam

The original name of the Village was Mattiyur, a part of which was made a Brahmin settlement under a new name, Nrpasekhara Chaturvedimangalam. The present name Chaturvedimangalam, is a shortened form of this name Nrpasekara Chaturvedimangalam. Nrpasekhara is obviously a title of a Pāndya ruler who established this as a Brahmin settlement. Who this Pāndya ruler was, we have no records. The earliest inscription from the village is that of Kulottunga Chola III, in his 21st year. The Village seems to have attained importance, from 12th century A.D. It has a occupied place of importance till the end of the later Pāndya rule. Kulottunga Chola III, Māravarman Sundra Pāndya, Jatāvarman Sundara, Jatāvarman Vikrama Parākrama, Māravarman Kulasekhara are represented by their inscriptions in this village.

The Village is called a Brahmadeya, situated in the subdivision Keralasingavalanadu. There is a Siva temple in the village. In all the early inscriptions, the ancient name of the Siva temple is Rudrakotisvara, which is retained to this day. A merchant named Purridam Kondān Thiruchirrambalam Udaiyān alias Jnānasambandan a merchant of Ariviyāur made an endownment for providing worship to the image of Aluddiyapillaiyār, in the temple in the reign of Vikrama Pāndya in 13th century A.D. A resident of Ariviyur also called Kulasekhara Pattinam, set up an image of Lord Dakshināmurti in the reign of Māravarman Sundarapāndya, the conqueror of Chola Country (early 13th century. A.D.) In the reign of Jatāvarman Kulasekhara the images of Natarāja and Goddess Umā (called in

inscription as Kūttadumdevar and Nācchiyār), received special offerings during mid-days. This image has been receiving great worship even in the reign of Māravarman Sundara Pāndya. A headman of a village, Kadirāyirram Udaiyān, made provisions for the same. Almost at the same time, another merchant of Ariviyur set up the image of Saint Thirunāvukkarasar in the temple. Another person of Ariviyur named Thirucchirrambalam Udaiyān made provisions for celebrating the Panguni festival on a grand scale. The great Pāndya ruler Sundara Pāndya, giffed 1.5 *Veli* of land in Vikrama Pāndyanallur, for conducting a special worship named Sundarapāndyan Sandhi, every month on the day of *Avittam* the natal star of the King. In the name of the King regular worship were offered in the Village.

In the reign of Kulottunga III, there was a monastery called Thirujnānasmbandan Guhai, built by one Isānadevan. It was situated in the place called Tappilāvācakan Thirumadaivilagam, belonging to the temple. A certain Viramalagiya Nishadarājan, gifted a land for feeding pilgrims halting at the monastery. There was another monastery in the village called Cholanvāsal Tirandān madam to which a land was sold by one Vānakovarayan of Rājarājapuram in Kongumandalam. There was a Vishnu temple called Thirunārayana Vinnagar, in the 13th century, receiving worship.

It is evident that the Siva temple in the village was held in great esteem by the merchant community of Ariviyur, called Kulasekhara pattinam. All the inscriptions are found on the enclosure walls of the Siva temple. The temple is a 12th century structure.

Devadanam

A number of later Pāndya rulers are mentioned in the inscriptions of the village. Maravarman Kulasekhara the con-

queror of Chola country is mentioned in two inscriptions. In one of the inscriptions, the Nagarattār of Semmaram alias Kulasekharapuram, gifted land to one Thiru Udaiyāndevan alias Pillai Serakonār of the village as *Pulamaivritti.* Pulamaivritti is a rare word used in inscriptions. It refers to the gift in honour of scholarship. The merchants have recognised his accomplishment and honoured him with the gift. The other inscription refers to the gift of lands for the repairs to the temple. Obviously the structure has undergone repairs after the reign of Māravarman Kulasekhara in 13th century A.D.

This temple underwent renovation in the reign of Jatāvarman Parākrama Pāndya in the 14th century A.D. An inscription (246) refers to the renovation of the temple. Thereafter a priest was appointed by the king as devakanmi, to do worship in the temple. The priest whose name is given as Mudivalangum Pāndya Brahmādarāyan alias Suryabhattan was serving as Devakanmi earlier in the temple of Thirukkalandiya Nāyanar of Karuvanallur in Arinadu. Obviously after renovation the ruler has given a new look to the temple. While giving this order, the ruler himself was camping in the village Devadāna. The successor of this ruler Māravarman Srivallabha, also visited the village and while camping there endowed a land as Thiruppanippuram. Probably the renovations continued in his reign also. In the 34th year the king granted a piece of land in Parāntaka Mangalapparrur in Arinadu for morning service to the deity by the royal donor. The order was issued to the tānattār of the temple. Māravarman Srivallabha, gifted the village Tondankulam for the expenses of the service called Āhavarāman sandhi, instituted by the king in the temple, festivals and for the sacred bath on the ashtami days in the dark fortnight. Pūrattadi was the natal star of the king. The king issued the grant while he was seated in the Eluttu mandapa (painted hall) at Varatungadevanallur, in Ariyanādu. The reference to Eluttu mandapa

is extremely interesting. The Govt. Epigraphist for India translates it as office room. But in all probability it refers to a painted hall. A painted mandapa in Tiruvannāmalai is even now called Eluttumandapa. The same ruler seems to have gifted puttaneri for the evening service of the deity instituted by him. In 1485 A.D., when Sanbaga Parākrama pāndya also known as Virapāndya was ruling, one Mannarvalam nokkinān of Veliarrur was appointed as a scribe for the temple and for his remuneration a piece of land was gifted. The order was issued in the name of the god himself. Two years later, Sankaranārayana Bhatta of Vashishta gotra and Asvalayana sutra was appointed in the temple for the service of *Adhyayana* in the temple. His remuneration was fixed by the grant of tax free land and house site. This record was also issued in the name of the deity.

In the year 1554 A.D., the Pāndya Dharmapperumāl Kulasekhara deva, who was also known as Parākrama Pāndya was ruling, the prince Alagar perumāl appointed one Urudai-mudali alias Irāpanyadevan of Madurai Sundaresvara temple as Mādāpatyakkanakku. This prince Alagar succeeded his father, in the name of Ativirarāman alias Srivallabha. As the king he gifted three pieces of land in the year 1582 A.D., at Settur pidāgai for special offerings and worship to the god. In the village there was a tank named Kovalan Uruni. In the reign of his successor 1598 A.D. Jatāvarman, Perumāl Abhirāmavaratunga Rāma alias Virapāndya, a flower garden was raised for the temple.

The name of the Siva temple was Thiruppagavanpārai Āludaiyanāyanār. Thiruppagavanpārai is said to have been in Semmaram alias Kulasekharapuram in Anmā nādu. In a 16th century inscription the name of the God is given as Naccādai Tavirtarulina nāyanār. The present name Naccādai Isvara is derived from this. The villages Kudarkuḍi, Semmaram, Settur

and Devadanam were in a flourishing condition as evidenced by the establishment of the Commercial settlement Kulasekharapuram in 13th century. Two successive Pāndya rulers Jatāvarman Parākrama and Māravarman Srivallabha in 15th cent. A.D. have camped at Devadanam village. Probably there was a royal palace in the village. Most of the gifts made to the temple (found recorded on the walls) from 13th century to the end of the 15th century, were made by the kings themselves which shows the importance of the place.

After the conquest of Madurai country by Kumāra-Kampana, the region continued to be administered by the Pāndya family. Jatāvarman Parākrama, Māravarman Srivallabha, Jatāvarman Perumal Vira Pāndya are the kings who ruled this area and whose records are found in the region. Towards 1529-30 the Madurai Nayak dynasty was established by Visva. nātha Nāyak, under the Vijayanagar emperor Krishnadēvarāya-Visvanātha, Krishnappa, Virappa and others ruled successively the Pāndya country from Madurai. Their records are also found in the region. But in Devadana, we find the records issued in the name of the Pāndyās in 1554 (Dharmaperumāl Kulasekhara) 1582, (Alagan Perumāl Ativirarāma Srivallabha) and 1598 (Perumāl Abirāma Varatungarāma Vira Pandya are found in the inscriptions of Devadana, showing their control. They were probably ruling as subordinates of the Madurai Nayaks but issued orders independantly. It is interesting that the Pāndyas begin to call themselves 'Perumāl' instead of their earlier title Udaiyārfrom 14th century onwards.

Devi Pattinam

The ancient name of the village seems to be Sri Vallabha Pattinam and its antiquity goes back to 13th century. Inscriptions of Jatāvarman Vikramapāndya, Māravarman Vikrama Pandya, Kulasekhara and Māvalivānadaraya are found in the village. Obviously the village was established as a coastal

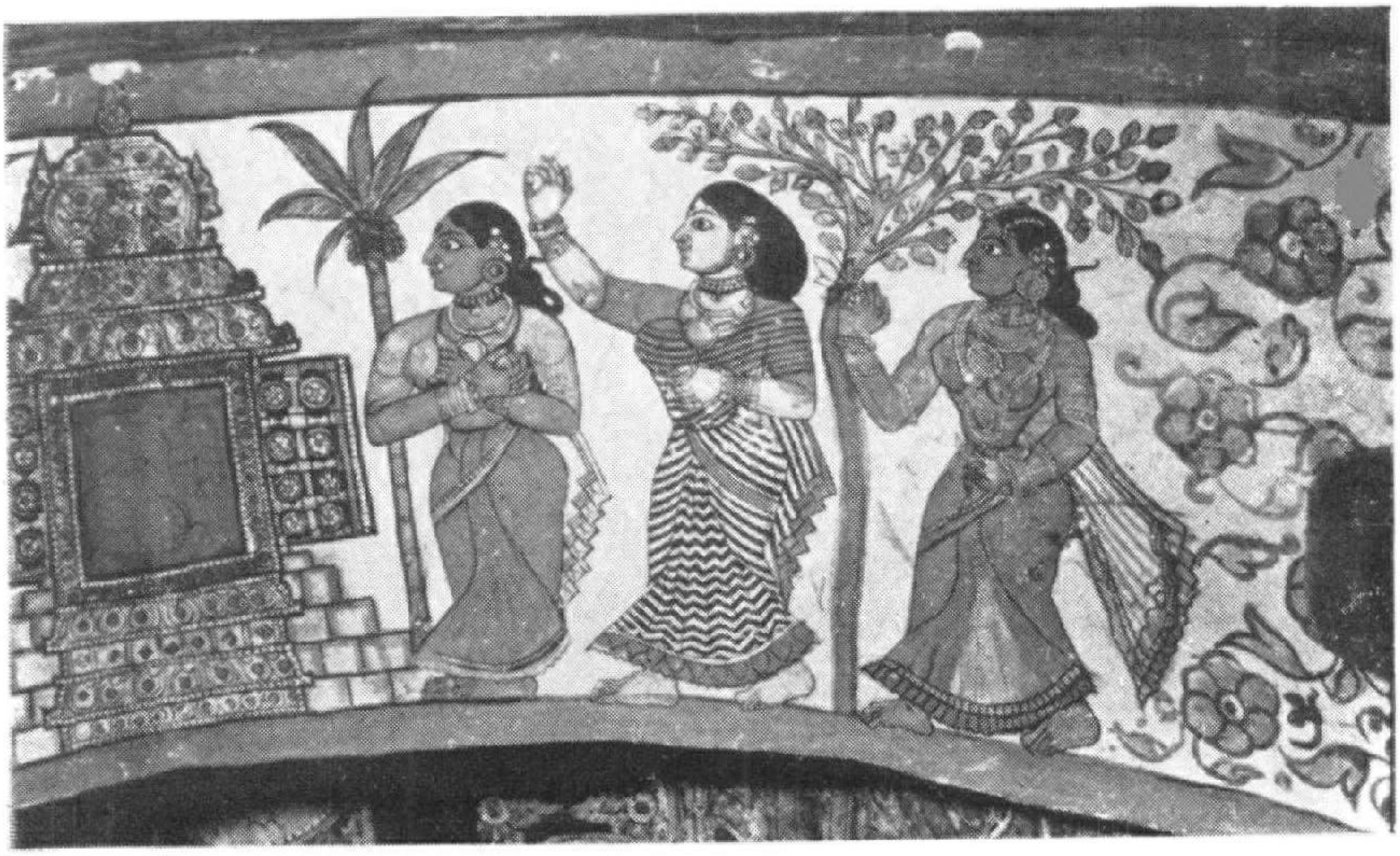
settlement in the reign of Pāndya Sri Vallabha in 12th cent. A.D. In 13th century the taxes collected within the four boundaries of Sri Vallabha Pattinam were given to the Tilakesvara temple.

The Kadaladaitta Perumāl temple in the village received gifts from Sundarattoludaiyān Mahabali Vānādiraja in 1533 A.D. (S. 1455). This chieftain seems to have asserted independance after Krishnadevarāya's reign.

Erukkangudi

Erukkangudi in Sattur Taluk of Ramnad district is a village to be remembered gratefully by the people of the district, for it is from this place hailed a noble, one thousand one hundred years ago who improved the fertility of otherwise dry Ramnad district, by fostering irrigation and agriculture, through digging and repairing several lakes, canals and sluices. He was a noble, ruling the sub-division called Irumchonadu, comprising Iruppaikkudi, Kudarkudi. Kulattur, Tiraiyur, Veliyankudi, Alangudi, Nenmali, Sattanur, Maralur, Koluvur, Sirputtur, Mudalur, Ilaviruppai etc. (Sattur, Mudukulattur, Kovilpatti, Vilattikulam areas in modern times). He served under the pāndya Emperor Srimāra Srivallabha, in the 9th Century A.D. and received titles etc. He was conferred the Chieftaincy over Irunconadu by the pāndya and received the name Iruppaikkudi Kilavan. This noble mainly concentrated on the development of irrigation. In Tenveliyankudi, Kummana Mangalam, Iruppaikkudi, Koluvur and Srivallava mangalam, the chieftain excavated new lakes. The lakes dug at Tenveliyankudi and Kummanamangalam were called 'Kilavaneri' after the name of the Chief. The lake at Iruppaikkudi was called 'Thirumal eri'. After the name of the ruling monarch Srimāra, the lake at Koluvur was named 'Srimāran eri'. Two other lakes dug there were named "Pugalneri nadai

Two dancing girls—Mural painting Ramalinga Vilas Palace, Ramanathapuram.
The dress, costumes, ornaments etc. show the way the dancers dressed

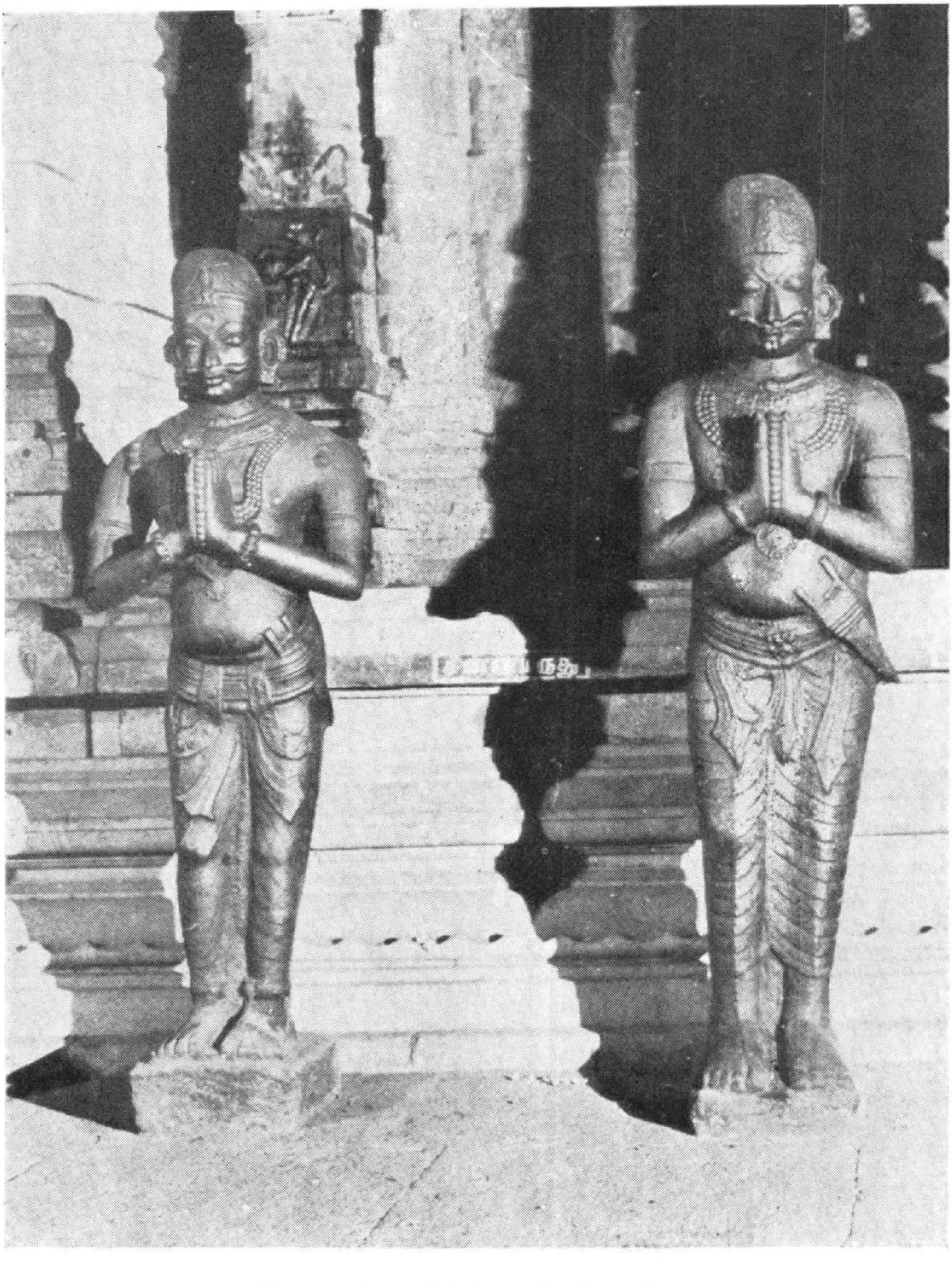


Mural painting in the ceiling

A damsel dressing herself before an ornamental mirror.
Mural painting - Ramalinga Vilas - Ramnad - 18th century.

Portrait of Periya Aiya.

Two Europeans saluting Vijaya Raghunatha Sethupati.



Portraits of Marudu brothers
Chinna Marudu and Periya Marudu-Kalaiyarkoil.

eri' and 'Pugalmali eri.' The Srivallabha mangalam lake received the name "Thirunāranan eri."

Many tanks in the villages of the region were repaired, renamed and made usable. A tank named Arasankulam at Koluvur was repaired and renamed Kilavan eri. The Alangudi tank is spread over an area of 125 acres and is still in use. For many tanks the Chieftain raised the embankments. The tank at Maranur was repaired thus, and received a new name 'Kilavan eri'. The Vallaikkulam tank at Irruppaikkudi was also repaired, under a new name 'Kilavan eri'. It was provided with a number of sluices with granite stones. This tank is still in use under the name 'Melamadaipperiyakulam'. One of the sluices was called Pattanmadai, by Kilavan. Among the many sluices provided by Etti Sattan, three seems to have survived and the rest having undergone renovation.

Similarly the great tank at Nenmeli was repaired by Sattan and renamed Kilavan eri. Spread over an area of 491 acres, the tank is one of the biggest irrigation tanks in Sattur region and is still under use. The Chieftain takes pride in his inscription for his utmost attention to irrigation.

A noble of catholic outlook, Etti Sattan patronised all religions alike and instituted worship for Siva, Vishnu, Subrahmanya and Jaina Tirthankaras. He erected Siva temples at Mudalur and Tenveliyankudi. A great Jain Palli was constructed by him at Iruppaikkudi. He was one of the officers who administrated 1400 coins endowed to the Subrahmanya temple at Tiruchendur, gifted by the Pāndya emperor Varaguna II.

Another significant act of this noble was to errect stone mandapas in a number of villages and help the village assemblies

to hold periodical meetings for the proper functioning of the village administration. Such pavilions called Ambala mandapa, were erected at Iruppaikkudi, Tenveliyankudi, Nenmeli and Kummana mangalam.

Etti Sattan a great noble who paid attention to the fertility of the soil, encouraged the function of the village self government and religious activity, was born of a family of eminent poets. His ancestors are said to have participated in the deliberations of the great sangam at Madurai. Quite fitting with his family tradition, he seems to have been a great lover of poetry. His important inscriptions are in excellant poetry and extol his greatness. His epigraphs are found in Erukkangudi, Nenmeli and Sinnakollapatti. Erukkangudi, the ancient Iruppaikkudi would be remembered forever for Etti Sattan. Two of his inscriptions are found in this village. Both inscriptions are found in a rock, 200 metres away, one to the west and the other to the south of the tank, one is dated in the 16th year of Pandya Saḍaiyanmāran Srimāra Srivallabha. It refers to the renewal of the embankment of the tank with a stone basement, and a construction of a stone sluice by Sattan. The tank received the name Kilavan eri. Two years later, another record in Tamil verse detailing the noble deeds of Sattan of digging tanks, and building mandapas etc. Both the records are in Vatteluttu characters. In 1695 A.D. a land was gifted for the merit of Singana Danda Nayaka.

Eriyur *(Sivaganga Taluk)*

The Siva temple now called Marundisvara, on top of the hill, was originally called Abhimuktisvaram. A nearby village was called Pāndimādevi nallur. The tenancy right of a land in this village was given to one Kidārattaraiyan an and his family. The tax on the land was fixed at one *dramma* for every mā.

Kanur *(Sivaganga Taluk)*

There were three temples in this village in ancient period (1) The Pralayavitankadevar, called as such in inscriptions. This temple seems to have been built either before or during the 13th century. (2) The second temple which was in existence in the 13th century was called Ennaiyāl Cholappillaiyāndār temple. A lose pillar lying in the Pralayavitankar temple, refers to this shrine. (3) The third temple was called Vira Pandya Isvaramudaiyar named after Virapandya a 13th century ruler. This temple is mentioned in fragmentary epigraphs found in the Vaikuntapermal temple of that village.

A certain Viratam mudittān Pallavaraiyar instituted a special sandhi (*Viratam mudittan sandhi*) after his name in the temple of Pralayavitankar in 13th century. The Pāndya ruler of 13th century provided for some food offerings to the god and ordered its distribution to the way farers. A part of land in the village belonged to a matha of Madurai. The inscription recording it says that the land (where the record is found) is a madappuram of the Sivaprakasa Pandaram of the Muttalakkum Thiruvasal. Kanur was in a flourishing state in 13th and 14th centuries A.D. In the Kanur taluk, a stone sluice carries a number of fragmentary inscriptions belonging to the temple of Valinallur.

Kallangudi *(Thiruppattur Taluk)*

The village has been in existense from 13th century A.D. under the same name. It was also called Thirucchirrambala nallur situated in Palaiyur nadu in the reign of Pandya Kulasekara. The name of the deity was Thiruppattisvaram Udaiyar. Under the Pandya in 13th century Gangeyarayan a chieftain excercised control over this region. In the reign of Kulasekara (circa 1300 A.D.) a mandapa was built in the temple, a pillar of which was gifted by Kunrathur udaiyan nāyan. In

the middle of 16th century A.D. the Palainadu became a sirmai under Tanjore Nayak and one Sevappa Vijayalayadeyan of Suraikkudi was the chieftain controlling the area. His son Achyutappa Vijayalayadeva granted some lands to the temple. The names Sevappa and Achyutappa were after the names of the Tanjore overlords.

Kilakkarai *(Ramanathapuram Taluk)*

The ancient name of the village was Kilakkarai. Its antiquity could be traced to 15th century. A Ganesa temple named Ninaittadu Muditta Vinayaga, was in existence in 15th-16th century A.D. A suburb of the village was named Kodaimangalam alias Ninaittadu Muditha Vinayaga Pattinam.

In a 16th century record, the Vijayanagar ruler Achyutaraya, and Tummuci Nayak made some gift. Another interesting inscription from the village dated 1531 A.D. proves the place to be a pearl fishery. In that year, an agreement was reached specifying half panam was to be given on every 100 pearls sold in Kilakkarai and the proceeds to be utilized for worship and repairs to the temple of Ninaithadu Muditta Pillayar. The Sethupati ruler Thirumalai Sethupati Maharaja made some gifts.

A copper plate grant was found in the village. The grant was given by Abhirama Ativirarama, the son of Ativirarama Pandya. At the request of one of his officers Aiyankarappa, son of Peddappa and grandson of Nagama Nayaka two villages were clubbed together under a new name Peddanayakkan Samudram, and gifted to 69 Brahmanas.

"From the middle of 18th century this place was subjected to foreign invasion. In 1759 the Sethupathis permitted the Dutch to trade in their territory under a treaty. The Dutch built a fortress in violation of the

treaty." Some remains of the buildings of the period still survive in the village.

The place is also famous for the Jamma Musjid, in which the tomb of Sithakkadi Marakkayar is located.

Kolavarpatti *(Sattur Taluk)*

This village was originally known as Kudarkudi, renamed Koluvarpatti around the end of 16th century A.D. In 1609 A.D. a person named Sevantinathapillai constructed the present Siva temple and dedicated it to Lord Chokkanatha and Angayarkannammai. Obviously this noble was a great devotee of the presiding deities of Madurai and has consecrated the Lord and goddess here in the same name. One Sevvanti Mudaliar built a gopura at Madurai in the later half of 16th century A.D. Three years later one Sekkilar Ariyanayanar of Paluvur in Tondaimandalam, gifted lands for offerings for the merit of the king Varatungarama Virapandya, Venkatapatiraya, Visvanatha Nayaka, Muthuvirappa Nayaka, and their servants (Ariya) Natha Pillai and Sevvantippillai. The donor belongs to the Sekkilar family.

Kondagai *(Ramanathapuram Taluk)*

There are two inscriptions coming from this village. In 1545 A.D. two parties of this village Kondagai had a dispute and went to the then ruling king for redress. The king Vijayanagara emperor, Sadasivaraya who was camping in Tondaimandalam, ordered that the matter should be settled by an arbitration of learned men in the presense of his general Saluva Nayaka. The dispute was settled and as a result, certain taxes were remitted on a village gifted to Thiruvenkatapuram. It is an interesting instance of people of a small village in Ramnad district having access to the Emperor on camp.

Kodumalur

Melaikkodumalur, dates back to 12th century A.D. It was situated in Vadatalai Sembinadu. The Siva temple in the village was called Uttama Pandya Isvaram Udaiyar. The village also received the name Uttama Pandya Nallur. The Siva temple is now called Kumilisvara temple. In the reign of the Vijayanagar ruler Achyutaraya, in (S.1456), 1535 A.D. the village was gifted away to Sethumadhava Perumal temple and repairs to Ramanatha temple (probably of Ramesvaram).

Kollam Kondan (*Srivilliputtur Taluk*)

A certain Periyakoil Nambi constructed the temple of Vikrama Pandisvara and Gauri Umaiyal and made provision for their worship, in the year 1592. In the reign of Dand-khan Hussain Saheb, the villagers agreed among themselves that the fishing fees levied on the tanks within the boundaries of the village Kollam Kondan and impost levied on the produce of the fields within the village at *Kuruni* per Kottai of paddy should be utilised for deepening the village tanks.

Kovilankulam

The present Ambalappaswāmi temple of this village, seems to have been a Jain temple. Constructed in 1118 A.D. in the 48th year of Chola ruler Kulotunga I. Twenty five Jainas from Sengatturukkai, (Modern Aruppukkottai) built a golden Vimāna and a mandapa to Mukkudaiyār. Two copper images of Mukkudaiyār and an image of Yakshi were also gifted. It is also said that the land for the temple and a watershed for the use of the devotees were given. The inscription is in an excellant literary style. Another inscription in the base refers to Cholakon, lord of Kumbanur, Kurandi, Kunrattur and Puttur. Probably under the inspiration of his chieftain

Cholakon, the jain temple was erected. Kurandi, one of the place mentioned under his command, was a famous Jaina centre. The ancient name of the village Kovilangulam was Kambanur.

The Vishnu temple in the village, now called Ananja Perumāl, was called in ancient times Gunaganābharana-Vinnagar-Emperumān. Its antiquity could be traced to 13th century A.D. Māravarman Sundarapāndya's inscriptions are found in the temple. An inscription dated in his reign refers to a gift of land to the temple in Gunaganābharananallur alias Sengatturukkai Kambanur. Obviously the village has received the new name Gunaganābharananallur after the name of a chieftain in whose reign the temple was built. It is not unlikely that the Cholaganga referred to above had the title.

Kovilur (*Thiruppattur Taluk*)

The modern village Kovilur was called in ancient times as Kalanivasal and Sivallapuram. The name of the temple is mentioned as Korravalisvara, which is retained even to this day. In January 1382, when the Vijayanagara ruler Sayana was in command of the region, the people of several agarams and villages as well as the tattas of far off places were summoned by Sayana Udaiyar and Gangeyar for transacting a regulation. This assembly decided that in marriages among the members of the Brahmin community the bridegroom should pay only eight Kalanju each of gold and silver and not more, for the jewels of the bride and that the transgressors of the above regulation would be deemed to have lost their caste. This decision was obviously a necessity. Some members of the Brahmin caste should have tried to pay more for the bride to get better girls and it upset the social balance and so the decision was taken by the entire community. The punishment was severe; the transgressor would lose his caste status. It was not merely the

Brahmins who were called in for the deliberation but also the Tattas, the goldsmiths. They were also made responsible for the agreement. In the 16th century, a certain Peddappa Vijaiyalaya devar son of Tīrāvinaitīrtha Vijaiyalaya devar of Suraikkudi was a great benefactor of the temple. The Vijayanagara King Sadasivaraya was the ruling monarch then. A monastery named Thiruvellaikkavalan Thirumadam, situated in the western street was very active then. A certain Thiruppunavasal Mudaliar of the Bhikshāmatha santāna was head of the matha then. The Suraikkudi chieftain gifted lands to this matha as *madappura iraiyili.* The nagarattar (merchant community) of Mattur also known Virapandyapuram renovated the temple in 1539 A.D. and arranged for a festival to be conducted in the month of Kartigai. The Suraikkudi Pettappa Vijaiyalayadevar and the temple authorites agreed to conduct the festival. This Suraikkudi Pettappa Vijaiyalayadevar, whose surname is given as Sriranganathar purchased some land and gifted to God Subrahmanya in the temple of Korravalisvara for food offerings and perpetual lamps. It was in the year 1550 A.D.

Koyil Marunjur

The siva temple in the village dates back to the 13th century A.D. to the time of Maravarman Sundara Pandya.

Kundalakkuttu *(Sattur Taluk)*

This village was known in ancient time as Kudarkudi. 11th century inscriptions are found on rock boulders in the village. Kudarkudi was in Irunjolanādu, a sub-division of Mudikonda Cholavalanādu in Rājarājapandi nadu. All the inscriptions found in the village are dated in the Chola reign. Two of them are dated in the rule of Sundara Chola Pandya, the son of Rajendra I. The third one is in the reign of Virarajendra, another son of Rajendra I. These records refer to the gifts made to the Siva

temple of Mahadeva of Kudarkudi. In the reign of Kulottunga I, (1102 A.D.) the village assembly of Alangudi, gifted a land to Kandan Sattan alias Karunilakkudi Nadalvan Peraiyan for repairing the sluice of Alangudi and Iruppaikkudi.

Kunrakkudi *(Thiruppattur Taluk)*

The name of the village is found as Thirukunrakkudi from the earliest available records that date back to 12th century. It is intimately associated with the river Tenaru, throughout the centuries. The village is called Kunrakkudi in Tenarrupokku, referred to as Tenarrupparru in 16th century. Kunrakkudi was situated in Adalaiyurnadu sub-division, the chieftains of which weilded powerful influence in the 12th-14th centuries A.D. When the Cholas conquered the Pandya country, the names of the territorial divisions were changed. Rajaraja effected this change. The name of the Pandya country was changed into Rajaraja Pandi Mandalam. In the reign of Kulottunga I, in 12th century, Thirukkunrakkudi is said to be in the sub-division of Rajendrachola valanadu in Raja Raja Pandinadu. When the later Pandyas asserted their independence the names were changed again. Rajendracholanadu was changed into Keralasingavalanadu, which remains till recent times. In a 16th century inscriptoin, Kunrakkudi was said to be in Niyamapparru in Tenarruppokku, in the sub-division of Adalaiyurnadu in Keralasingavalanadu.

There are three groups of monuments in Kunrakkudi. A Jain settlement, with ancient rock inscriptions dating back to the pre-christian era, is found on one side of the hill. The second group consists of three excavated cave temples dedicated to Siva, with rock cut sculptures assignable to 8th century A.D. The third and the most popular is the Subrahmanya temple on top of the hill. Most of the inscriptions throwing light on the mediaeval history of the village, are found in the excavated Siva temple.

The antiquity of the Subrahmanya temple could be traced back to 12th-13th century A.D. Inscriptions referring to Jatavarman Vira Pandya are found on the walls of the Subrahmanya shrine on the top of the hill. The God Subrahmanya is referred to as Ilaiyanayanar. This name is found even in 16th century A.D. A certain Sokkanarayanan Vijayalayadevan, gifted lands for worship to god Ilayanayanar in the reign of Vira Pandya (13th century.) From about 1485 to 1515, the area was under the control of a powerful chieftain Ramaviraperumal Gangeyan, who issued the records in his name in saka era. In 1484, the chief gifted the villages Puduvur and Anaimangalam to his guru Thiruppunalvasal Mudaliyar of the Bhikshāmatha Santhāna residing at Thiruvellaikkavalan Thirumadam. In 1515 he gifted land in Tayankudivāyal alias Ravikulamānikkanallur for offerings to Ilaiyanayanar during the Pallieluchi. Arunagirinathar, the famous saint has extolled the greatness of Lord Muruga of this hill. He calls the hill as Tungamalai, Mayilin Malai and Mayuragiri. He also states that the village was made fertile by Tenaru. From the sacred hymns of Arunagiri, the Subrahmanya temple has become the most sacred Murugakshetra of the district.

In the reign of Maravarman Sundarapandya, the conqueror of the Chola country in 13th century A.D. one Avani Gangan set up the image Subrahmanya Pillaiyar for the merit of Nagadevan alias Pagaiccavarkāla Pallavadarayan who died in a skirmish at Periyakkottai. It is not known whether this refers to the setting up of the Mulasthana image of Subrahmanya or another image (probably an *Utsava vigraha*). If it refers to the consecration of the main image, then here we have the date for the foundation of the Subrahmanya temple. If however it refers to another deity, it is interesting that an image of God Subrahmanya was installed for the merit of a hero who died in a battle.

The Siva temple carries three excavated rock cut shrines, with the addition of later mandapas. The three rock-cut shrines are adjacent to each other and are in a row. At the beginning is a rock-cut sculpture of Candikeswara. The first cave is elaborately sculptured. They are Garudāntika Vishnu, Lingodhbava, Harihara, Durga, Nataraja, Subramanya, Ganesa and Dvarapalas. Unfortunately the sculptures are badly covered with plaster in recent times, preventing us from appreciating their beauty. They are good examples of Pandya art. The second cave has only one sculpture namely Garudāntika Vishnu fortunately without plaster. A point of interest in the sculpture is the long *Tulasi* garland worn by Vishnu, extending upto his ankle. The sculpture shows a rugged strength, characteristic of the Pandya sculptures of the period. In between cave 1 and 2, an image of Ganesa is carved. There is no sculpture in the cave No. 3. Encasing the three cave temples a mandapa was constructed later. In one of the rock cut pillars and on the floor are seen Vatteluttu inscription in bold characters reading Māsiliccuram. On grounds of style the caves are assigned to the 8th century A.D.

The Siva temple is now called Tenarrisvara temple. (Skt. Madhunadisvara temple). The mediaeval records give three names - Tenarru Nayakar, Thirumalai Udaiya Mahadeva, and Mulasthanam Udaiya Nayanar. May be these three names refer to the deities of the three cave shrines. In the reign of Kulottunga Chola I in 12th century, the temple received great benefactions in the hands of the local chieftain, Adalaiyur Nadalvan. In the 40th, 48th, & 49th years of Kulottunga this Adalaiyur Nadalvan whose name is given as Virasekharan gifted lands to the temple. In the 40th year of Kulottunga I this chieftain Virasekharan Adalaiyur Nadalvan, who also had the title Virudarājabhayankara, granted remission of taxes on all the devatana lands to the temple. In the 12th century a discendant of this chieftain whose name is given as Mummudi

Cholan Virasekharan Adalaiyur Nàdalvan, made a gift to the temple in the reign of Jatavarman Sri Vallabha. The temple also received a land for flower garden from one Katti arasan a resident of the village in the same reign. In the beginning fo 14th century during the reign of Maravarman Sundarapandya, who captured the Chola country, many gifts were made. The Bhairava image now under worship was set up by one Porpati-priyan alias Seliya singapanmar of Sakkalur. The inscription recording this fact is found engraved to the right of the Bhairava image. A certain Kandan Aludaiyan alias Kalavayilnadalvan of Niyamam in Tenarruppokku gifted land for daily worship of this Bhairava mentioned as Kshetrapala Pillaiyar. In the same reign Adalaiyur Nadalvan issued an order to the Nattars of Thiru Arrangudi, Koneri Thiruingaikkudi, Panaikkudi and Kuratti of Kilkundaru in Adalaiyurnadu, revising the rates of taxes to be paid by them. The change in rates were necessitated because the standard land measure was changed from 18 spans to 24 spans.

In the later half of 13th century, during the reign of Vikrama Pandya, a certain Uyyavandān Kandan Gangeyan alias Tyaga migāman, gifted lands.

In the reign of Srivallabha the servants of the temple, took on lease, lands belonging to the temple and gave an agreement to one Tambikkinallān Aludaiyan Endisaimikāma pallavadiaraiyar, to make over to the temple stipulated quantities of every class of produce from the lands leased out to them. The name Mikamapallavarayan seems to indicate that they were sea farers and served as naval officers.

In 1560 A D. the mandapa in front was renovated and other worships performed by the Nagarattar of Ilayattankudi in Kulasekharapuram. The renovations were carried out for the merit of Vijayalayadeva and his brothers. They were the

chieftains of Suraikkudi who were powerful from 15th to 17th century A.D.

The Siva temple thus occupied a very important postion from 12th Century A.D. and then on the Subrahmanya shrine reached its eminence.

In a 13th cent. record, a monastery (matha) is mentioned. The Nattars of Niyamapparru, gifted a land as Matappuram, to the Kālaiyarkālan Thirumadam of Kunrakkudi.

In the reign of Rajendra Chola, a Kulicchevagan of Rajendra Chola Adalaiyur Nadalvan gifted a sandhi lamp to the temple.

Kamudi *(Mudukulattur Taluk)*

There is an old fort about 250 years old near the town situated on high ground above the Gundar. This was built by Thiru Udaiya thevar alias Vijaya Raghunatha Sethupathi who ruled over Ramanathapuram Kingdom between 1711-1725 with the assistance of the French engineers. This is a small fort, but had two lines of fortifications and contained buildings and a fine wall. After the fall of Panchalankurichi on 25th August 1801, the forces of the East India Company controlled this strong fort of Kamudi belonging to Ramanathapuram. The forces of Sivaganga under Marudu captured this fort. But the fort was soon recaptured by the Company's forces and was dismantled thereafter. Legend says that Kattabomman stayed for a day in this fort on his way to Ramanathapuram to meet the then Collector Jackson on 9th September 1878.

Kalaiyarkoil

This is one of the most ancient settlements of the Ramnad district, and is atleast 2000 years old and dates back

to the sangam age. Its ancient name was Kānapper. A chieftain named Vengai Marban was controlling this town. One of the Pandyas, Ugraperuvaludi of Sangam age captured this place and assumed the title "Kanappereyil Kadantaugraperuvaludi". The Siva temple here was held in veneration from 7th century A.D. The temple here is one of the biggest in Ramnad district with imposing towers, mandapas etc.

Several epigraphical records are found in the temple. Most of them relate to the later Pandya Period.

The name Kalaiyār seems to gain currency from 13th century. The deity of the temple called Kānapper udaya Nayanar. In the inscriptions of Sundara Pandya and others this is called Kānapperudia Nayanar. But in the 16th century records it is called Kanapperudaiya Nayanar Kālaiyar Somanāthar. Obviously the name Somanatha gained currency because of the great work done in the temple by the Tapasvin, Somanātha who also was called Aghora Siva. He was held in high esteem by the Pandya ruler and was their guru, who received gurudakshina lands. He constructed the Amman Shrine and also set up the metal image of the Devi called Thiruvithi Nāchiyar. Ever since 16th century the name Kānapper disappered and the name Kalaiyar became popular. The present deity Somesvara is the main Somanatha of the epigraphs. The Siva temple has many structures and lofty towers.

In the reign of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya Somanatha deva who is called a Vaidya chakravarthi, and Aghora Siva Mudaliar got a tax free gift of land as Kārānmaikkāni. Vikrama Pandya, who ruled with Jatavarman Sundara, gifted the village Velangulam, as *guru dakshina* to this Aghora siva mudaliar. The village was renamed Somanathanallur after the name of the guru and was gifted by the teacher to the temple of Kānapper udaiya Nayanar. This monk erected the Amman shrine called

Kāmakottamudaiya Aludia Nācchiyar temple and also a processional image, *Thiruvithi nachiyar* in the reign of Vira-pandya. In the same century a chief Perumkarunaiyālan instituted a special worship in the temple in his name. There was a Pidari temple, the goddess being called Pidari Toli Nācchiyār. There was another temple dedicated to Ayyanar. Of the deities in the big temple, the following mentioned in the epigraphs are of interest.

1. Nacchiyar Tan Men Mulaiyar.
2. Aludaiya Nacchiyar.
3. Sellappillaiyar and
4. Aryappillaiyar.

From one undated inscription it is learnt that a Ganesa image called Saktivinayaka pillaiyar was set up in the temple. In the reign of Maravarman Kulasekhara, end of 13th century A.D., a dancing girl named Nakkan seyyal Kalingaraya Talaikkoli brought some lands from another dancing girl Tani Ānaiyitta Perumal Talaikkoli, repairred the local tanks and brought under cultivation some lands. So the viliage assembly confered on her certain priveleges exempted her from paying certain taxes like Ponvari, Tattar pattam, Inavari, sandi vikramaperu, etc. She was expected to pay two *kalam* of paddy for one mā as kadamai, and half an *accu* equivalent to 14 panams as Nāduvilai, per annum to the temple. A point of interest is that most of the members of the village assembly, who have signed the document bear the title devan like Uttamachola Pandyadeva.

Irājasinga deva,
Nallasinga deva,
Chola Ganga deva
Adigaisingadeva
Valudisinga deva.

Similarly in a majority of the records of this period, the signatories of the village assembly are deva, which shows that the community now called Devar were dominant in the region as early as 13th certury A.D. The records refer frequently to the trees grown in the region as Panai, Mā, Iluppai, Pungu, Puli, Avirai, Kolunji, Vembu, Athi, which are called forest trees *Vanamaram.* Also they refer to Aippisi varahu, Chithrai kuruvai, Ādikkuruvai. The variety called Kodai kuruvai is also refered to. Another point of interest in the records of the temple, is the drafting of the deed. The deed drafts mention specifically that the mistakes in leaf, letters, words and meanings இலைக்குற்றம், எழுத்துக்குற்றம், சொல்குற்றம், பொருள் குற்றம் நீக்கி) should not be taken into account. 'While measuring dues, the standared measure used in the shops of Settur, should be used' says the record. A standard measuring rod, *Sundara Pandyan Kol* was in use in the region. Accu, Panam and Varāha panam were some of the names of coins under circulation. One Malava devendra paraiyar sold some lands for 30 *varāhan* and the cash was accepted after it was testified by a coins-tester Adittadeva who is cited as *Vannakku.* It shows, there were coin testers present in times of transactions in villages.

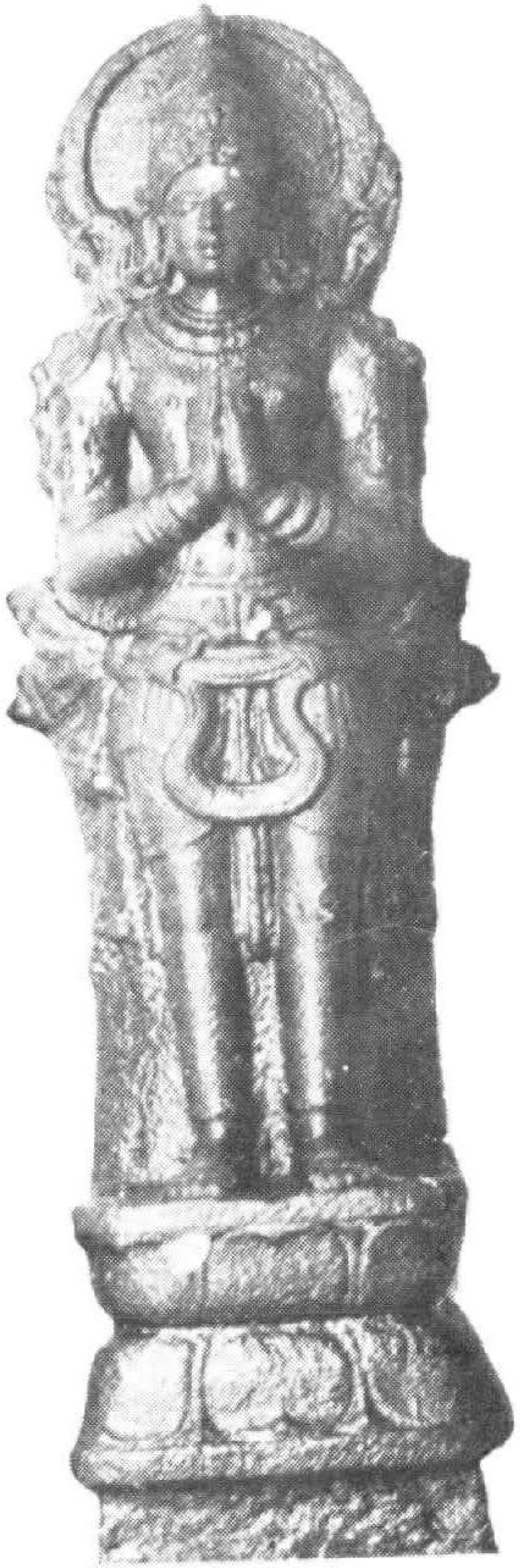
Two records refer to the destructions caused to the temple by Muhammadan invasion. A record dated 1511 A.D. states that the kitchen of the temple was demolished during Muhammadan invasion and that the temple contributed money and a certain Dhanmapāla the other portion of the expense and re-erected the kitchen. So, the Muhammadan invasion should have taken place before 1510 A.D. 22 years later, Thirumālirunjolai Ninran Mahābali Banadiraja, was holding sway.

It is stated that a strong fort was built here by the Sethupati. It was under Muthu Vadugunatha Sethupati in 1772.

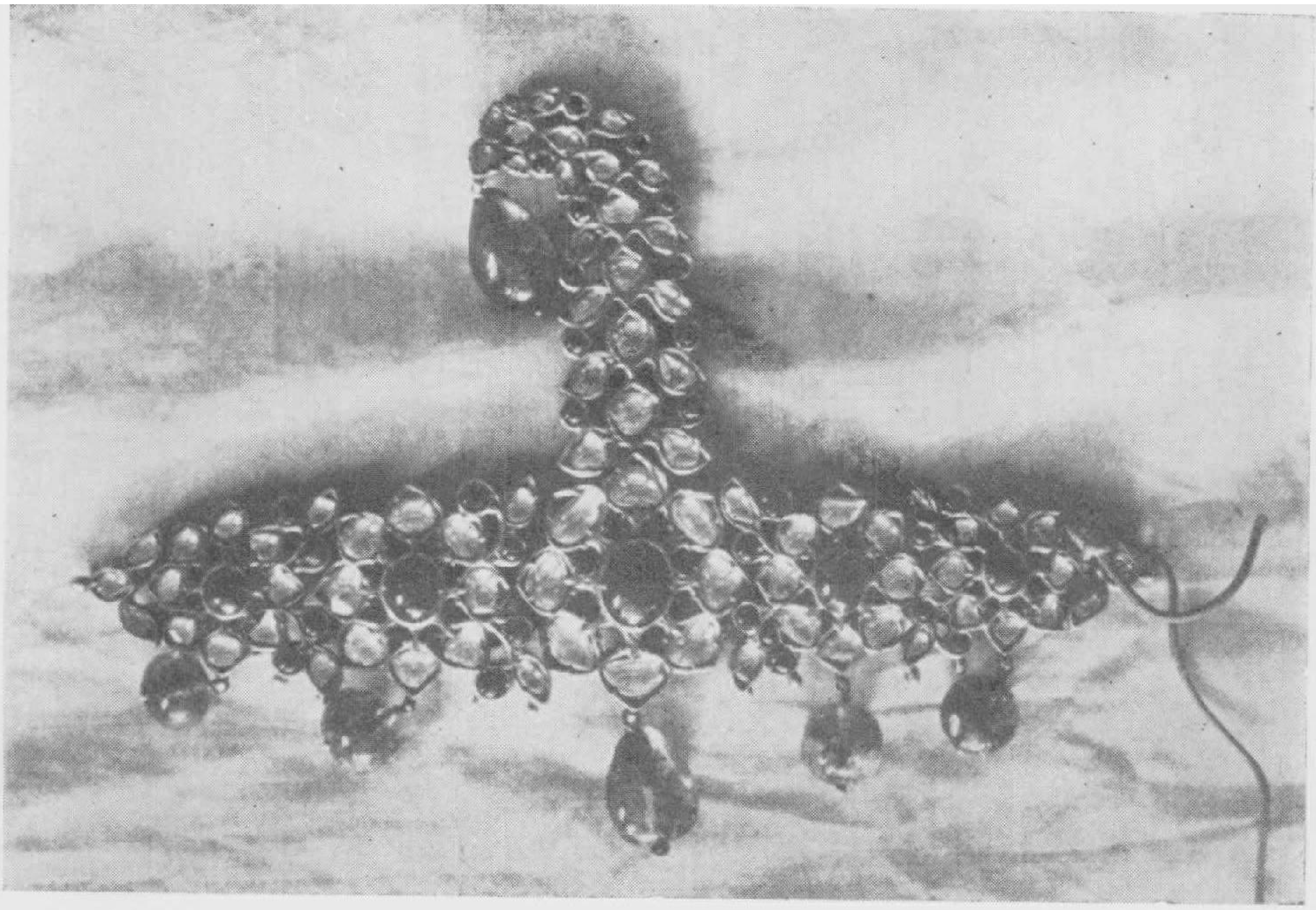
Portrait of Thirumalai Nayak and his queen—Sheet metal embossed work covering a stone portrait—copper sheet gilded with gold—Srivilliputtur.

Portrait of Kizhavan sethupati-Kalayarkoil

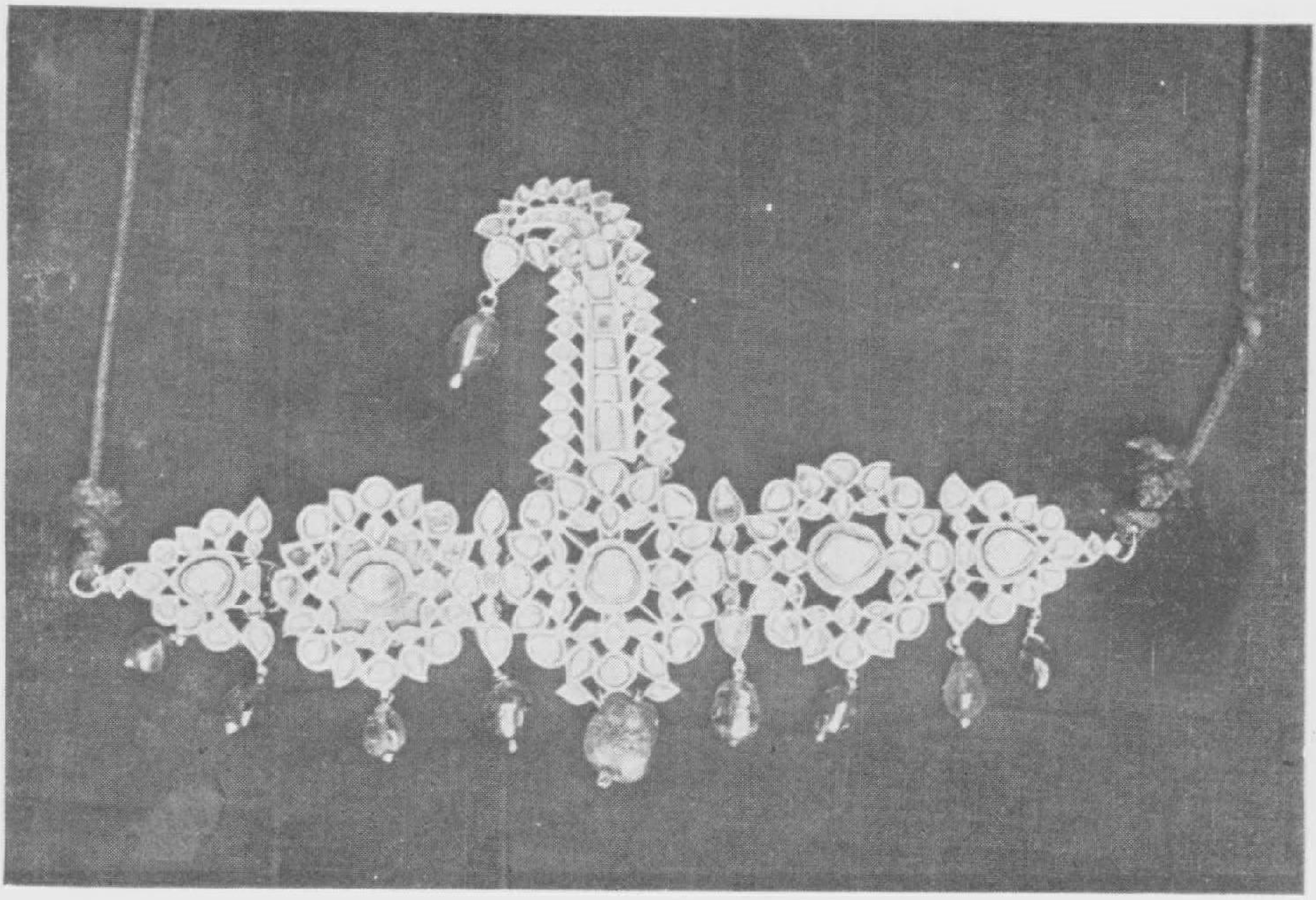
Portrait of Raghunathasethupati alias Thirumalai sethupati Thiruppullani



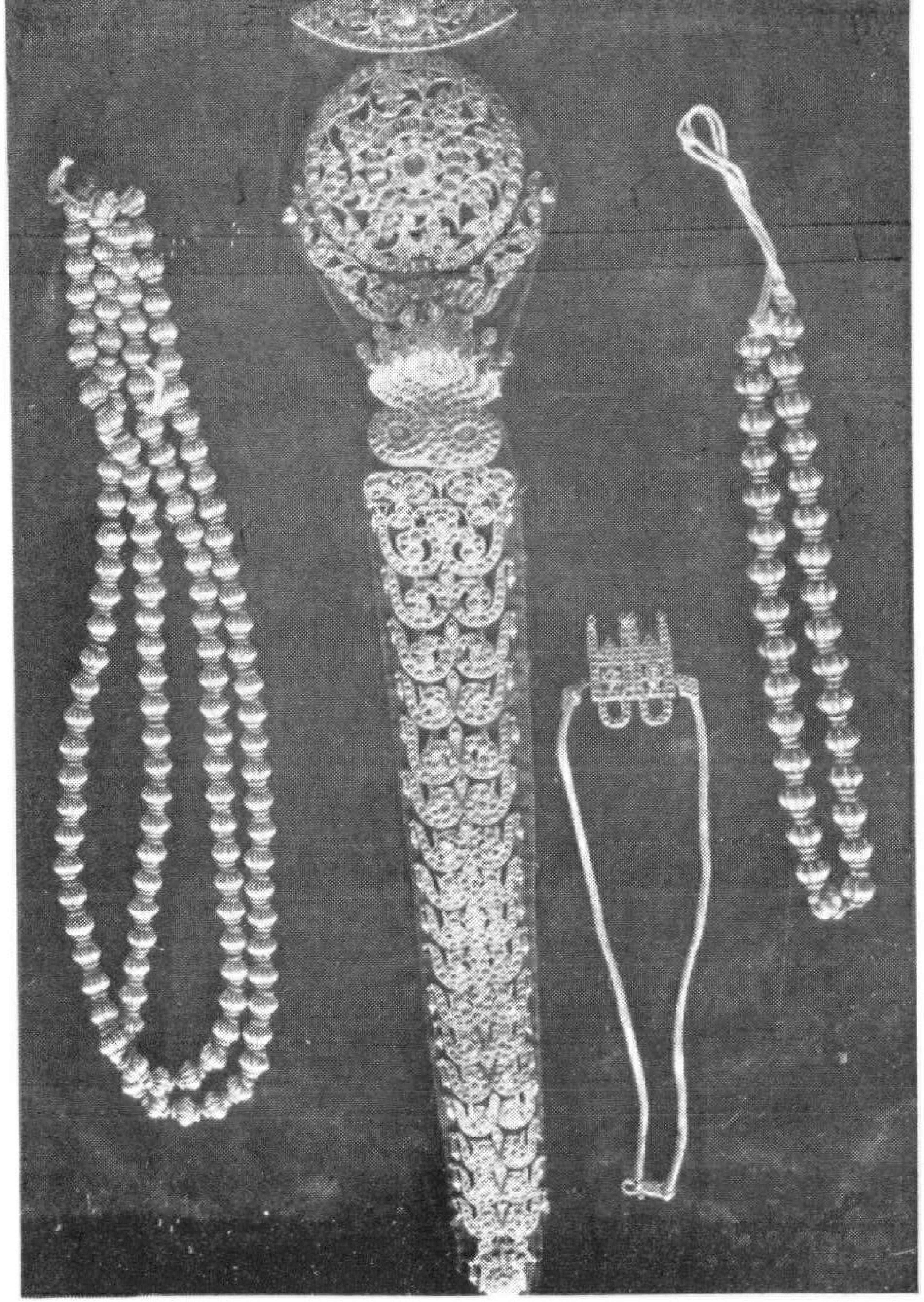
Suladevar stone-Thiruppattur later Pandya–13th century A.D.



An ornamental jewel in the Subramanya temple at Kunrakkudi, Thiruppattur taluk.



A similar jewel in the Vishnu temple at Srivilliputtur.



Jataiyalankaram and Katalaikkaimani-ornaments in the Siva temple-Thiruvadanai.

Ear ornaments called Kuzhai for Andal, Vishnu temple–Srivilliputtr.

TAMIL NADU STATE DEPARTMENT OF

when the British captured it after reducing Ramnad. But soon the Marudu Brothers established their rule over Sivaganga and Kālaiyārkoil. Kālaiyārkoil is remembered for the heroic struggle the Marudu Brothers put up against the British. These heroic brothers built the south tower. When the British captured Kālaiyārkoil, but not Vellai Marudu, they threatened to pull down the tower. To save the temple Marudu surrendered. The tombs of Marudu are still there facing the temple.

It is said that the Ganesa shrine (called Sellappillaiyar) in the temple of Kānapperudaiyar remained destroyed due to Muhammaddan invasion and that one Chidambaranatha and others rebuilt the temple, consecrated the image of Vinayaka and arranged for its worship. These two records show that the temple suffered desecration and damage during Muhammadan invasion.

There are two records of Bana chieftains in the temple which are of great interest. One of them belongs to Irandakalam eduttan Sundara Toludaiyan Mahabali Vanadarayan and the other Thirumālirunchólainiran Mabali Vanadhirayan. The first is dated 1532 and the latter 1534 A.D. In the first record, Sundara Toludaiyan instituted a special worship in the temple in his own name. Both the Banas, probably father and son, assumed significant titles and issued records in their name, referring to Saka era, without mentioning their overlords. Obviously they were excercising independant authority in the region. Among the titles, Bhuvanekavira, Battamānamkāttān, Setu Mula Raksha purandaran are significant. Sethupatis of Ramnad assumed these titles in 17th, 18th century A.D. The earliest Sethupati known to history is Dalavay Sethupati who seem to have assumed charge of protecting Ramesvaram 'Sethupati,' around 1600 A.D. The title Sethupati is a shortened form of 'Sethupati Kātta Devar' (called in Sanskrit Sethumula Rakshā purandara). Before this dynasty, the function was discharged by the Banadarayas in 16th century as evidenced

by these epigraphs. When the Sethupati assumed power, he took over the titles of the Banas. By 1532, the Vijayanagar emperors Krishnadevaraya, and Achyuta have established the Madurai Nayak rule in the Pandya country. Probably they allowed the Bana chieftains to hold sway in the Ramnad region. But towards the middle of Achyuta's reign and also in the reign of his successor Sadasiva, expeditions were sent to Ceylon and the country was conquered. The Vijayanagar emperors found probably it was no longer safe to allow the Banas freedom, and in their reorganisation of the pālayams, entrusted the work to the Devar (Dalavay) which started the Sethupati sway over the region.

Mahipalan Patti (*Thiruppattur Taluk*)

Situated about six miles northwest of Tiruppattur, this place is the celebrated Pungunram of Sangam age, from where the poet Kaniyan Pungunran, the author of the saying "*Yādum Ūre, Yāvarum Kēlir*" (யாதும் ஊரே யாவரும் கேளிர்) hailed. The village is atleast 2000 years old. In the mediaeval period, a territorial division was named after this village and was called Pungunra nadu. There is an excavated cave temple on a hillock here. The cave temple is an early Pandya temple with a rock cut Linga. An image of Ganesa is also carved nearby. There are many records inscribed on the walls of this temple.

Maraneri (*Sattur Taluk*)

The village was known as Maramangalam in 13th century and was renamed as Sundarapandyanallur. An inscription of Virapandya, 13th century, mentions the name of the Siva temple as Sundarapandisvaram Udaiya Nayanar. Obviously the temple was built after the name of Sundarapandya (I or II?) in the beginning of 13th century A.D. The Amman shrine also seems to have come into existence in 13th century and received a gift of land.

Mettupatti *(Attur Taluk)*

An ancient foundation dating back to the 13th century A.D., the village was gifted for the merit of Vijayaranga Chokkanatha Nayaka and Chinnavadamalai Pillai in 1723 A.D.

Melacheluvanur *(Mudukulattur Taluk)*

The ancient name of the village was Seluvanur alias Satrubhayankaranallur. It was situated in Idaikkulanadu, a sub-division of Madurodayavalanadu in Pandimandalam. The name of the Siva temple in the village, in 13th century A.D. was Thiruppulisvaram Udaiyar. The name is retained to this day. The temple was in existence from 12th century A.D. Early in his reign Maravarman Sundarapandya, exempted taxes on lands gifted to the temple. A coin named *alasempadi-acchu* is mentioned as a currency in his reign. The temple also received gifts in the reign of Maravarman Kulasekhara Pandya in 13th-14th century A.D.

Another Siva temple in Kidaramkondanallur is mentioned as Thiruananthisvaram Udaiyar.

Mel-Kidaram *(Mudukalattur Taluk)*

The village was in existence in 13th century. The name of the deity is called Thiruvanantisvaramudaiyar. But the shrine has been renovated.

Nacchiyarpuram (Alagapuri hamlet) *(Thiruppattur Taluk)*

The prosperity of the village is traced from early 13th century A.D. The present Siva temple Alagamānisvara temple was called "Vaniga Narayana Isvaram" and the village Alagapuri alias Seliya Nārāyanapuram. It was a flourishing commercial settlement. A chieftain Udayan Ceydan Gangeyan was active here in the reign of Maravarman Sundara. In the late 13th century A.D., the boundaries of the village was redifined by

leading an elephant and the 248 houses in the village were expected to pay taxes. In the next year all the residents of the streets around the temple were directed by the village assembly to pay the tax dues to the temple. Also another family of chieftains, Adalaiyur Nadalvan was active here.

Nattarasan Kottai *(Sivaganga Taluk)*

This is one of the places that every one should be proud of. For here rests the mortal remains of Kamban the most outstanding poet of Tamilnad called Kamban samadhi, it is a tiny little shrine, housing stone relic, and receiving regular worship. Eminent thinkers and poets of Tamilnad assemble here every year in the month of Panguni and pay their respect to Kamban. The Nagarattar community is greatly devoted to this samadhi. Besides this, there is a Siva temple and a Devi temple in the village.

Panaiyadipatti *(Sattur Taluk)*

The Madurai Nayak, Visvanatha Chokkanatha Nayak, gifted in the year 1671 A.D., a land in the village Panaiyadipatti, for meeting the expenses of the abhisheka of the god Visvanathaswami at Madurai, installed by Kumaraswami Mudaliyar.

Paramakkudi *(Paramakkudi Taluk)*

The antiquity of the village goes to 13th century, to the time of Maravarman Sundara Pandya. The local Siva temple received benefaction in 16th century (1567 A.D.). The ancient name of the temple is Thirukkayilāyam, alias Iyamanisvaram Udaiya Nāyanar.

Pericchi Koil

The earliest reference to this village is dated 11th century in the reign of the Chola Pandya Viceroy Jatavarman Virachola

Pandyadeva. The village was called Menmarudur and also Jayamkonda Chola nallur, obviously renamed either after Raja Raja Chola I or Rajadhiraja Chola I. An image of Kshetrapala received great attention in the hands of Maluva Mānikkam, a chieftain, of Pungunra nadu. This family of Maluva chieftains, contributed greatly to the development of the region. The Kshetrapāla of 11th century is still under worship in the temple. In the 13th century the village attained great eminence under the rule of the Later Pandyas.

In 1240 A.D- under the reign of Maravarman Sundara, the temple is called Thiru Mattukkarai Nayanar of pericchiyur. A certain Kandan Udayan Cheydān Gāngeyan, a chieftain figures prominently in the records of this place and region. His family occupied greater importance in the succeeding years also. This Udayan Cheydān Gāngeyan, was a great patron of letters. One Periyan Adicchadevan a poet (*Pulavan*) composed a poem (*Pillaikkavi)* on this Chieftain and in honour received a gift of land. Another poet Kārānai Vilupparaiyar, a court poet of the Pandya, was a friend of this chieftain Gāngeyan. This Gāngeyen set up an image of Subrahmanya in the temple. This image was also called Elaya Nāyanār, and Kunramerinda Pillaiyār and received great worship. The same chief also consecrated an image of Nataraja called *Adiravisiāduvar.* The name of the Goddess of the temple was Periyanācchiyar in 13th century. During the same period an image of Palliyarai Nacchiyar was also under worship.

In the year 1468, one Gurukulattaraiyan set up the images of the God, the Goddess and the image of Subrahmanya (probably metal images) and arrange for worship and festivals. The village assembly honoured him with some previleges like sounding the bugle, and proclaiming "Hail! Kurukulattaraiyan Tambirān has come". A number of Mathas were in existence in the village. Thirugnanasambandan Thirumadam,

Thirunavukkarasan Thirumadam and Virapandyan Thirumadam were active in 13th century. The image of Kshētrapala continued to receive great worship in 13th 14th centuries. The name Pericchiyur was renamed Virapandyapuram towards the end of 13th century.

In 1245 A.D., under the great Maravarman Sundara, the village suffered due to heavy taxation. The Gangeya chieftain conducted a measuring survey of the lands, and reduced the taxation. Another inscription says that the heavy taxation was introduced earlier obviously under the later Cholas to sustain them in their bloody war in the region. Maravarman has taken steps to relieve the people of the sufferings immediately on his assumption of power. In 1375 A.D., there was enemity between the Paraiyas and the other residents in the 24 villages including Karuppattur and Paganeri. There was fight and blood shed on both sides. A Gangeyarayan, settled the dispute and directed the villagers to pay annually on good and bad occassions, certain quantity of produce to the Paraiahs for the service done by them.

Perumkarunai *(Mudukalattur Taluk)*

This village served as a territorial division in the reign of Vijayanagar rulers. It was called Perumkarunai parru. There are three temples in the Village, whose antiquity could be traced back to the mediaeval period. The Siva temple seems to have been built by an army of Kulottungachola I in the beginning of 12th century A.D. It is called Thiruvelaikkara-Munrukai-Isvaramudaiya Mahadeva. The Mūnrukai Mahāsena, was very popular in Thirunelveli region, on behalf of the Cholas, particularly they were keeping a watch over Srilanka. These powerful army seems to have built this temple in all probability had some connection with the village. An inscription of Kulottunga, refering to the name of the temple is found on the door jambs. Fragmentary inscriptions of Virapandya, the conqueror

of Ilam, Kongu and Cholamandalam, in 13th century are found in the temple.

The Pattabhirama temple in the village was called in ancient time as Perumkarunai Perumal. The record is dated in 16th century A.D. The name of the village Perumkarunai seems to have been derived from this. The Varadaraja temple carries inscriptions of 13th century Pandyas in fragments.

Palli Madam (*Aruppukkottai Taluk*)

The ancient name of the village was Pallippadai, forming part of Thirucchuliyal in Paruttikudinadu. The Kailasanatha temple in the village dates back to nineth century A.D. and was erected as a sephulchral temple to Sundara Pandya. So it was called *Pallippadai Sundara Pandya Isvaram.* The temple received great attention under Virapandya, who assumed the title Cholāntaka and Cholan Talaikonda in the closing years of nineth and yearly 10th century A.D. One of his lieutenants Cholāntaka Pallavaraiyan alias Māran Ādittan of Poliyur, provided a perpectual lamp and gifted 75 sheep for the same. A certain commander Sāttandevan of Kirankudi, received the sheep and agrred to maintain the lamp. The Chieftain Māran Ādittan, mentioned earlier gifted endowments to the temple of Thiruppattur. In the reign of the same ruler, a number of dancing girls were performing dance in the temple, their names are also given. Attached to the temple was a matha named *Mahōvrati Matha*, for which provisions were made for lamps. The ghee for the lamps was measured by a standard measure called *Cholāntakan Nāli.* This temple was in a flourishing condition in the 9-10th century A.D.

Two inscriptions belonging to a Jain settlement of Kurandi Thirukkāttām Palli, dated nineth century A.D. have found their way to this temple.

Piranmalai *(Thirupattur Taluk)*

This mountain town occupied an important place in the region, in ancient period. It was prominent meeting place of merchants of various territories. The temple on top of the hill is an excavated cave of the early Pandya period. It was held in great veneration and was called Dakshina-Kailasam, and houses an image of Uma mahesvara. A Pandyan sculpture of 8th century is found near the front mandapa. Later many additions have been made in 13, 14 & 15th centuries A.D.

The hill is called Thirukkodungunram and the Lord Nalla Mangaibhāgar, a name retained to this day. Kodungunram is said to be situated in Malainadu. In early 13th century (1219 A.D.) in the reign of Sundara Pandya, a Paradesi named Thiru Nīru Pēni Anivān, gifted a brass lamp, and money for burning it. A lady Ammai Arapperun selvi, gifted sheep for a lamp. Jatavarman Sundara (1267 A.D.) gifted some village for worship. Almost at the same time, in Virapandya's reign, Thiru Ambala Perumal, a resident of Alagapuri, consecrated a deity, Nayanar, Thiru Ambalaperumal, on top of the hill, bought a land for 70 *Seliyar Palankāsu* and gifted it for worship and maintenance of the above deity. There existed another shrine called Alavayudaiya Nayanar to which cows were gifted for providing milk in the reign of Kulasekhara around 1300 A.D. The present Subrahmanya temple was called Ilayapillaiyar temple. In Kulasekhara's reign a Mayilerumperumal of Ariviyur, set up the metal images of Ilayapillaiyar and Nachiyars (Goddesses) as there were no images for procession and arranged for festivals, by endowing money. The Gopura in the temple was built by one Bhuvanekavira, in 13th century, and was called Bhuvaneka Viran Thiruvasal. An interesting record of the reign of Parakrama Pandya, 14th century is available. The village Kudalur, was under the control of Māluvaccakravarti. It was not able to pay taxes after the nineth year of the King. The territorial assemblies, the commercial guilds

(Nagarams) and the village assemblies of the region met. The Kudalur assembly said "We are unable to pay the taxes. You can sell the lands as you please". The officers of Māluvaccakravarti insisted on payment of taxes. The regional assemblies finding no other way, auctioned the lands in public. One Karainur Velar bought the land by paying 840 panams, called valid currency of the day, (அன்றாடு வழங்கும் நற்காசு), and the proceeds of the land were assigned to the temple.

Another record of great interest relates to the assembly of all the commercial guilds here and apportioning certain part of their sale proceeds as taxes to the temple, as this temple was under the protection of the merchant guilds. It is a detailed excellent document of the 13th century. The merchants had their own pedigree like the Kings. The list of commodities, their mode of transports and measurements and the tolls levied mentioned in the record give an insight into the commercial organisation of the period.

In 1500 A.D. under Saluva Immadi Narasingaraya, his Commander Eppuli Nayaka apportioned certain taxes to the Brahmins here. The same Nayak gifted in the same year Kīlai Kudalur as a Mathappuram to Pāndimandala adhipati, Pāndi Nattu Mudaliar of the Bhikshamatha Santhana alias Lakshādhyāyi Santhana of Golaki Matha who was the chief pontiff of Arupattu Muvar Thirumadam at Thirukkodumkunram. In 1518, under Krishnadevaraya, the Arantangi chief Ponnambalanatha Tondaiman instituted a morning service in his name. In 1532, under Achyutaraya, a land gift was made to another pontiff called Isana Siva who also had the title Pāndinattu Mudaliyar. He was a disciple of the Bhikshamatham Santana alias Lakshādhyāyi Santana of the Kallar Madam of Thirukkodungunram. A number of gifts were made in the reign of Achyutaraya.

Even as late as 1711 the Madurai Nayaka, Vijayaranga Chokkanatha Nayak made gifts to the temple.

The temple is situated under picturesque surroundings and has many portrait sculptures, some of them inscribed, giving the name of the donors. The Gopura entrance has an intricately carved wooden door, carrying also some interesting metal knobs. The temple at the foot of the hill, has an impressive ornamental lamp. The temple was a great centre of dance and music till recent times.

Pillaiyarpatti (*Tiruppattur Taluk*)

Pillaiyarpatti is a small but impressive village about seven miles from Karaikkudi railway station. A rock-cut Siva temple here is important for the study of early Pandyan art.

A structural temple, also dedicated to Siva, was added as early as 1200 A.D. to this cave. The Nagarattar have lavished wealth on this temple and have arranged for regular worship.

The rock-cut cave is at the foot of a hillock and faces north. Its ground plan is not as is usual in Pallava caves. Facing the entrance is a seated Pillaiyar. Of his two arms, the left is placed on the waist and the right holds a *Modhaka*. The trunk is turned to the right, as is usual in early Ganesa sculptures. The absence of the *upavita* and the representation of three strands as the *udarabandha*, instead of a snake, as is customary, are note-worthy features of this, one of the earliest Ganesa sculptures in South India.

Next to this panel is an interesting image standing gracefully between two attendants. This figure is also two armed with left placed on the waist and the right in the *Varada* pose. The treatment of the lower garment is rather heavy with a median loop in the centre. The *upavita* is like a rounded garland, thick and taken over the right arm, another motive noticed in early sculptures. The waist band is shown only on

the right side. This figure has been identified as a portrait of a a Pallava king (Mahendra) and on that basis even the excavation of the cave was ascribed to the Pallavas.

It is now generally accepted that at the beginning of the seventh century A.D. Thiruchi was the southern most limit of the Pallava kingdom and that their territory did not extend further south. This is supported by the absence of any Pallava inscription south of Thiruchi and by the stylistic differences between Pallava and Pandya Sculptures. The identifiication of this portrait with a Pallava ruler was only doubtfully suggested, so also the other suggestion that it is a representation of Subrahmanya. The absence of any significant emblems made it difficult to identify this figure.

On close examination, it may be found that the right side of the head-dress is represented as a *Jatamakuta*, while the left is a *Kirita*. It is therefore, evident that this figure is Harihara. The attendant figure to the left is Garuda, while the one on the right might represent Candikesvara or Nandikesvara. This Harihara panel is only one of its kind so far noticed.

By the side of this panel is the *garbhagrha*, facing east. The sanctum is in the Gajaprshta form (apsidal), rather rare in rock-cut caves, with a Sivalinga in the centre, also carved out of the rock. Carving the Sivalinga inside the sanctum out of the same rock is quite common in Pandya caves, but not in Pallava caves.

On the side wall of the sanctum is a sculpture representing Lingapurāndevar, carved only upto the waist. This image resembles the Harihara figure very much. The head is adorned with a *Jatamakuta*, while the portion below is shown as a flat pillar.

On the wall to the north of the *garbhagrha* there is an inscription in archaic vatteluttu characters *Ikkatturkon-Perun-*

taean, probably referring to the excavator of the cave. The inscription is much damaged at the end. On paleographical grounds, the inscription may be assigned to the sixth century A.D. and the excavation of the cave may also be ascribed to the same period.

The other Siva shrine needs no special description since it is later. It consists of a garbhagraha, a mukha mandapa and mahamandapa with a prakara.

Besides the earliest inscription in vatteluttu already referred to, there are others of later date engraved on the pillars and walls of the excavated cave. These inscriptions give some interesting historical facts about this temple and the village. According to the earliest inscription, the village was called Ikkattur, while a little later the place is referred to as Tiruvingaikudi of Kalkundram in Keralasinga valanadu. A part of this village was also known as Marudangudi. During the reign of Kulottunga III, this place was under his sway before it was wrested from him by Sundarapandya. In Kulottunga's reign sanction was accorded for establishing a colony of Nagarattar in Marudangudi, and was named Rajanarayanapuram.

Many other names are remembered about which no historical data is now available. Lord Ganesa is worshipped with great devotion as all merciful, and giver of wealth the prosperity, and so the village has assumed the name of Pillaiyarpatti.

From the inscriptions it is learned that Siva in the rock-cut cave was called Tiru Ingaikkudi Mahadevar while the Lord of the other shrine was called Marudangudi Nayanar. Sundara Pandya seems to have visited this temple three times, as known from his inscriptions. Gangeyan, an officer working under him established a service to Ganesa, after his own name as Gangeyan sandhi. In the reign of the same king, Uyyavandan Andal,

wife of Ālavanthān Narathongarayan, a vassal of the Pandyan king at Nemam, gifted lands for special worship on Sivaratri days to both Tiruvingaikudi Mahadeva and Marudankudi Nayanar. In the time of Vikrama Pandya two metal images of Goddesses were consecrated to both the Lords as Palliyarai nachiyars. An inscription of Kulasekharadeva(about 1305) refers to the gift of tax-free land for providing offerings of *pittu* and *panikaaram* every Sunday to Desi Vinayagan in the temple of Ingaikudi Mahadeva.

It is evident that Ganesa called Desi Vinayaka, received the adorations of kings and nobles for over 700 years. This carved image of Pillaiyar is the earliest known to survive in Tamiladu.

Ramanathapuram *(Ramanathapuram Taluk)*

"The place derives its name from Lord *Ramanathaswamy* of Rameswaram. It is said that the town was originally known as Mugavai nagaram. The origin of this name is traced to the epic *Ramayana.* The legend has it that *Rama* directed Guha to build a town near the mouth of Sethu. The sea is said to have been then very near to Ramanathapuram. The town came into existence and was known as Mugavinagaram meaning mouth or entrance town. Even now Ramnad is addressed as Mugavai.

It was the capital of Ramanathapuram zamin and the taluk. Ragunatha Sethupathi alias Kilavan Sethupathi (1674-1710) transfered his capital from Bogalur to Ramanathapuram. It was also the capital of the district in 1795 A.D. It is now a municipality and the headquarters of Ramanathapuram district is at Madurai having been shifted during the British period so as not to eclipse the position and status of the Raja of Ramanathapuram in the presence of the collector.

Raghunatha Sethupathi constructed the Ramanathapuram fort by brick and stone walls of 27' height and 5' thick surrounded by ditch and defended by 32 small bastion, now ruined. A

mile west of Ramanathapuram are the remains of the fort and the buildings of Sethupathis called *Moolai Kothalam.* The fort was formerly garrisoned by a company of native infantry. Ramanathapuram was stormed by Thirumalai Nayak during the reign of Sadaika Devar alias Dalavay Sethupathi, and the Sethupathi was captured and taken to Madurai. In 1726 Tanjore forces advanced to Ramanathapuram, captured and took Tanda Devar as prisoner and ruined the fort. During the reign of Muthuramalinga Sethupathi, his minister Damodaran Pillai strengthened the fort and placed it in a thorough defence. In 1772 the company's forces supported the military undertakings of the Nawab of Carnatic and captured Ramanathapuram. The fort passed into the hands of the Nawab of Arcot. In 1792 the British occupied Ramanathapuram having been surrendered by the Sethupathi to the company by a treaty, owing to his inability to pay the revenue which was raised to Rs. 2,20,000. Raja Muthuramalinga Sethupathi was deposed for rebellion in 1795. The fort was not very extensive and was never a formidable one. It was occupied by Colonel Martinz of the Nawab's service who commanded the place as well as regularly disciplined provincial battalion bearing his own name for upwards of 30 years. He constructed a bungalow on the eastern bank of Muhavai Urani and to the west of the palace and it was known after his name.

The extensive palace was built by Kilavan Sethupathi in the centre of the fort with high stone walls which still exist. Some of the old artillery are kept in the palace as exhibits for the visitors. On the northern side stands the magnificient building known as Ramalinga Vilasam. Sethupathis are accustommed to take their seats during ceremonial occasions. In There is a pavilion in front of the building. Government office are located in some of the buildings of the palace.

The Ramalingavilasam contains mural paintings of historical interest. The panels depict scenes from Ramayana, Bhagavata, Sthalapuranas of temples connected Sethupati's life and episodes connected with the life of Muttu Vijayaraghunatha Sethupathi, who ruled in the first quarter of 18th century A D. The panels are labelled both in Tamil and Telugu. Muthu Vijaya Raghunatha Sethupathi, is portrayed repeatedly in various poses and at many places his name is inscribed. In the front hall, Muthu Vijaya Raghunatha sethupathi and the Sthalapuranas are seen. Included in the panels are the fighting scene between the Sethupathi and the Marattas of Tanjore. Even the names of the cannons are given. In another panel, the Sethupathi is seen receiving three Europeans. Below this scene a Jesuit missionery is being welcomed. At the back are seen Bhagavata scenes. In the rear hall held sacred by the Sethupathis are seen on the walls the complete story of Ramayana from the beginning to that of Sita Kalyana. The arched ceilings portray the Sethupathi in various dresses and poses. Sethupathi is shown receiving the Royal sceptre from Goddess Raja Rajeswari in one panel. In another he is shown listening to Rama Katha. Yet in another, he is dressed like Manmatha, and his wife as Rati. A panel of historic interest shows the Madurai Nayak Vijaya Ranga Chokkanatha Nayak performing *Ratna pattabhisheka* to the Sethupathi. The panel is inscribed.

In the upper storey, the Sethupati is shown in various amourous poses, listening to music and witnessing dance. In one panel he is shown in the company of his mistress, in the midst of several wine jars.

Ramalinga Vilasam is the only palace, having extensive wall paintings of secular nature comparable to the Pahari and other schools of northern India.

A description about Ramanathapuram will be incomplete without a mention about Saint Thayumanavar. He came to

Ramanathapuram a few years ofter 1644. He was born to Kediliappa Pillai and Gajavalli Ammal at Thiruchirappalli, when Kediliappa Pillai was the finance minister under the King. At the age of 18, when his father died, Thayumanavar stepped in to the shoes of his father and was appointed in the same post by the King. After some service he resigned the post and spent his time in meditation and pilgrimage. In 1662, he thwarted the danger to Sethupathi from the Portuguese by leading an army to Ramesvaram Island. After some time he settled in Rama nathapuram and died at the same place. A temple has been constructed on the spot where he was in samadhi.

On January 25th 1897, Swamy Vivekananda visited the town during the reign of Baskara Sethupathi, and stayed at Sankaravilas which exhibits an oil painting of swamy Vivekananda commemorating his stay there.

Christ church, an old protestant church, was built by Colonel Martinz, a French catholic military officer. During the period of Lord Bentink it was consecrated and handed over in 1804. Colonel Martinz died in 1810 and was burried here. F. W. Ellis, collector of Madras. who died in 1819, Rev, Mr. Souter and members of the Shutie family were also burried here. Baskara Sethupathi has presented a highly ornamented brass lantern to this church. The Singatope church called St. Thomas Chapel is simple attended by protestant residents of this area. This old catholic church is artistic. The windows are fitted with stained glass depicting the mortyrdom of John De Britto. Inside the church pictures portray the life of Jesus.

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Ramesvaram *(Ramanathapuram Taluk)*

The name Ramesawaram is derived from Rama the hero of Ramayana. Lord Siva as Iswara was worshipped by Rama, hence the name. The place is also called in Sanskrit as Devanagaram meaning city of God. Rameswaram was originally founded

by Rama after his invasion of Ceylon. After killing Ravana, Rama sojourned at Gandha Mandhanam in the island of Rameswaram with Sita. The Rishis advised Rama to establish a Linga and worship it so as to expiate the sin of Brahmahatya committed by slaying Ravana. Rama fixed an auspicious time and sent Hanuman to Kasi Kshetram for fetching a Lingam. As Hanuman failed to return in time Rama established a Lingam which was made by Sita, on the advice of the Rishis. On seeing an already established Lingam Hanuman got angry and tried to uproot by coiling his tail round it. He was not able to remove it but only got his tail broken and fell down bleeding. To testify to this event one can see to the north of the east main gate a big image of Hanuman in red colour. Marks made by the tail are also visible on the Linga. To pacify Hanuman, Rama asked him not to grieve over the matter but to fix his Lingam a little to the north of that made by Sita and ordered that all poojas should be done first to the Hanuman Lingam and only afterwards to the Rama Linga. It is known after him as Hanuman Linga or Kasilinga. The Lingam established by Sita was called as Rama Linga, Ramanatha and Ramesvara. Ramalingam of Rameswaram is one of the twelve Jyothi Lingams in India.

The great temple of Ramalingaswamy stands on rising ground in the northern part of the island and great wealth has been lavished on it by the Sethupathies. This is one of the great fourteen sacred temples of the Pandyas. Upto 12th century this temple was located in a thatched shed in charge of a Sanyasi. The massive temple as it stands at present is not the work of one age, but extends for a period of more than 500 years and has been erected and endowed almost by one family, the Sethupathi cheifs of Ramanathapuram. The temple buildings are surrounded by a high wall covering an area about 285 meter from east to west and 215 meter from north to south. The height of the eastern Gopuram is about 40 meter and that of the west is 25 meter. The Gopurams are built of stone and brick

from the base to the summit. There are unfinished Gopurams on the north, south and two completed ones on the east and west. The eastern Gopuram with nine storeys of 40 meter height was completed during 1897 to 1904. The gateway on the west is 25 meter high and is elaborately carved with mythological figures, its form being trapezoid. The workmanship is massive and regular and the architecture resembles pyramidal style. The other three Gopurams are 60 meter high, composed of single upright stones with others laid across at the top. The largest of the three is that on the east. It is not on the wall of the present outer enclosure; but on that of the inner one, surrounding the inner prakaram. Outside the main wall, on the same side are two large porticoes, one opposite to this Gopuram and leading up towards it, and the other to the south leading into a subordinate Gopuram in a line with the last and surmounting the gateway in front of the temple of the goddess Amman. Inside the gateway is a colonnade having a passage between triple row of pillars to a square of about 200 meter into which the sacred temple opens. The colonnade runs along the four sides of the quadrangle. It measures from north to south 120 meter and east to west 220 meter by 5 meter in breadth. The ceiling is composed of large slabs of granite supported by 1212 carved granite pillars each 4 meter high raised on each side by a platform of 2 meter high, most of the pillars are single blocks of stone; all brought from a distance of 40 miles. The corridors are the most celebrated feature of the temple. These extend to nearly 1350 meter in length from 10 meter broad and from the floor to the centre of the roof about 10 meter in height. Each pillar is composite and highly elaborate in design. The impression produced by such a display of labour when extended to an immense length is unique. Here the side corridors are 230 meter long and open into transverse galleries as rich in detail as themselves. These with the varied modes of lighting, produce an effect, that is not equalled certainly anywhere in India. Unfortunately the whole has been

so extensively white washed and fairly painted that the general effect is altered, and much of the intrinsic, sharpeness of detail is eclipsed. The art displayed is perhaps not so good as in some other temple. Much of the effect produced on the mind of the observer is due to the immensity of the labour employed combined with a certain picturesqueness and mystery. Inside the great enclosure is the third prakaram abutting on the east wall measuring about 230 meter east to west and 135 meter north to south. Like the entrance passage it has a corridor on a raised platform on each side of it and run round the four sides of rectangle which it encloses.

Within it and nearer the east face is an area, 125 meter from east to west by about 100 meter from north to south also surrounded by high wall enclosing the second prakaram. This prakaram is by no means so imposing as the third. This prakaram is left partly built and the renovation work is in progress. With this first prakaram are the shrine of the God Ramanathaswamy and of his consort Parvatavardini Amman, Visvanathaswamy and Visalakshi Amman, besides a number of smaller shrines and rooms. The masonry structure around the inner shrine of the sanctum-sanctorum of the temple was built by a Ceylon prince styled Parakramabhahu in A.D. 1173, the latter having had the stone hewn at Triconamalle and numbered on the spot ready to be put together. The north and south Gopurams were built by Keerana Royar of Deccan about 1420 A.D. The western gopuram and the outer surrounding walls are the work of Udayan Sethupathi and Komaty Chetti of Nagore in 1434 A.D. and statues of the merchant and his wife surmount the eastern wall. In 1450 Amman prakaram and other additions were made to the inner building by a wealthy Hindu from Madurai and others during the days of Viswanatha Nayak of Madurai. The southern half of the second corridor was constructed by Thirumalai Sethupathi (1647-1672) whose statue and that of his son

Raghunatha stand side by side on the southern entrance of the Amman temple and are honoured with garlands and offering of betalnut and flowers every Friday night when the image of the deity is brought to this place on its way to Palliarai or bedroom in the Amman temple. Ragunatha Tirumalai Sethupathi also built the rest of the second prakaram in A D. 1657-58. In 1623 the Nandi Mandapam and the Ardha Mandapam in the first prakaram were built by Kuthan Sethupathi. The Nandhi is a giant structure made of sudhai work with a height of 3 meter, length 7 meter and breadth 4 meter. The great unfinished eastern gopuram is the work of Dalavay Sethupathi (1635-1646) who also built the Sabhapathi shrine in the north-east corner of the third prakaram. In 1715, Vijaya Ragunatha Sethupathi, erected besides other buildings, the palliarai or bed-room of the Amman temple and the Mandapam in front of which are statues of himself and his brother. In about 1740 Kumara Muthu Vijaya Ragunatha Sethupathi began the third prakaram setting up the entrances into it from the gopurams on all four sides and it was completed by Muthu Ramalinga Sethupathi in 1769. The statues of the latter and of his two ministers Muthirulappa Pillai son of Soundara Pandiya Pillai and Krishna Iyengar with members of his family are conspicuous in the corridor in the western entrance".

A number of inscriptions in the temple are of great interest. A recently discovered copper plate charter of the early Chola ruler Parantaka mentions that the Imperial ruler performed *Tulabhara* and gifted gold to the temple in early 10th century. The Chola records in the temple have disappeared in the renovations. The later Pandya records dateable to 13th century A.D. are found in a much damaged condition. A record dated 1468 A.D. (saka 1390 A.D.) refers to Gopa Tippa also known as Thirumalai deva, a viceroy of the Vijayanagar in the south. He set up the dvajasthamba in front of the Amman shrine and gilded it with gold. A recently

discovered record from Kamakshi temple, Kanchipuram, refers to the Tulabhara performed by this viceroy at Ramesvaram. He was a contemporary of the celebrated Tamil poet Kalamegam. The Tanjore Nayak Achyutappa, (in second half of 16th century) was a great devotee of Ramesvaram, who visited every year this temple, worshipped the deity and built a gopura there.

His son Raghunatha Nayak the great, an ardent devotee of Rama, built the Rama temple at Ramesvaram. The portrait sculpture in the Nandi mandapa, probably belongs to Achyutappa Nayak and his father Sevappa. Under the Madurai Nayak, Virappa, in the later half of 16th century, the temple received great benefactions. A saint named Ramanatha was living here and added many structures. This saint built in 1598 A.D. the Ādal mandapa i.e. dance hall in front of the central shrine. The Kotitirtha mandapa was built by him in 1608 A.D. However the majority of the gifts were made by the Sethupathis; prominent amongst these were Dalavay Sethupathi, (1604 A.D.) Thirumalai Raghunatha Sethupathi are available. The Ramalingesvara was built in 1608 A.D. The Natamaligai mandapa and Aruda mandapa were built by Kuttan Sethupathi in 1623. The silver swing was gifted by Vijaya Raghunatha Sethupathi, son of Raghunatha.

Srivilliputtur (*Srivilliputtur Taluk*)

This sacred place will be remembered as the birth place of the outstanding Vaishnavite devotee -Andal and her faster father Periyalwar. The Vishnu temple has three main adjuncts, the main Vatapatrasayi temple, the birth place of Kodai, and Rangamannar shrines. Besides these, there is a Krishna temple and a Siva temple further away. There is also a small palace of Thirumalai Nayak, now used as a Government Office. The earliest inscription that has survived in this village, is vatteluttu dated in the reign of Sadaiyan Maran an early Pandya of 10th

century A.D. The record calls the village Villiputtur and refers to a sluice and canal being named after a chieftain Sankaran Mari Arulakki the Kilavan of Anmar nadu. The decision was taken by the village sabha probably because the chief had them made. A Tamil verse in praise of the chief is also inscribed. Another early record of the same century extols the greatness of another chief named Cholappiran also called Dramidadhiraja. Among other inscriptions in the same temple, two are dated in the reign of Cholas, one Kulottunga I (1098 A.D.) and another in the reign of Rajaraja II, middle 13th century A.D. A number of inscriptions of the latter Pandyas of the reign of Sundara, Vira, Kulasekhara and Parakrama are found in the village. Parakrama Pandya gave a village Papagni, to the temple of of Pallikonda Perumal (Vatapatra Sayi) and Sudikkodutha Nacchiyar. In 1453 A.D., Narasimharaja, gifted a number of villages in Tenkarai and Vadakarai. Kulasekharadeva, gave some lands in Viramakulam, to Pallikonda Perumal. Later Pandyas of Tinnelveli, like Abhirama Parakrama and others have also gifted lands to the temple. The Kerala ruler, Vira Udaya Martandavarman gifted the village Parantakanallur to the God and Goddess.

Around 14th century Andal shrine seems to have been constructed by the Bana chief? Mavali Banadhirayar. The base of the shrine carries inscriptions of great interest. Most of the 15-16th century inscriptions, make use of the phrases taken from Andal's verses, an unusual but delightful mode of expression.

This has assumed great significance from 14th century A.D. under the Banas. In 1550 the Vijayanagara emperor Sri Sadasivaraya, gifted many villages to the Goddess. It must be mentioned that under Krishnadevaraya, Andal has been greatly venerated in Vijayanagara capital Hampi, where separate temples came to be erected for her. An interesting record is engraved in 1455 A.D. It refers to an order of the deity Sundararaja, at the

instance of the temple authorities as Kudavar, Kovanar etc. granting an ūr in Paganur Kurram, as Adukkalaipuram, to Goddess Kodai from among the lands in his own enjoyment; when he was hearing the compositions of Sadagopan, seated under the canopy of pearls named after Kulasekhara on the seat Venburudaiyan Pitham in Sundara Pandya mandapam. In 1591 A.D. under Madurai Nayak Virappa, the tank named Bommaikkulam alias Thirumalirunjolaippereri (named after the Bana chief) was renamed Virappan Samudram and the lands and residential areas were gifted to Thirtakarai Alagar. The order is said to have been issued by the Geddess Kodai herself, at the instance of the officials (*Muddirai Manusha*) of Tuppacci Thirumalaiyan while the Goddess was seated along with Pallikondaruliya Paramaswami of Vadaperum koil on the seat called Alagiya Manavalan Pallikkattil. One should invariably study the inscriptions on the temple for their poetic beauty and the impact of Andal's poetry over the people.

Immediately in front of the main shrine, is a pillared mandapa, with the portrait of Thirumalai Nayak, his queens and his brother. A point of great interest is that the stone portrait of the King and his queens are covered with copper embossed covers, guilded with gold. It is a striking example of the art of metal embosser of the 17th century (Please see illustration). It is of fine workmanship and is true to the stone work and fits in very well. Apart from the artistic merit of this portrait, the descendants of Thirumalai Nayak arrange special worship to the portrait annually. The Parivattam honour, as used to be given to the King when he was alive, is given to the portrait even to this day by the temple authorities.

There is a very fine mandapa in the front carrying excellent sculptures of the Madurai Nayak period. Probably the mandapa was built by that great Nayak Virappa towards) the end of 16th century.

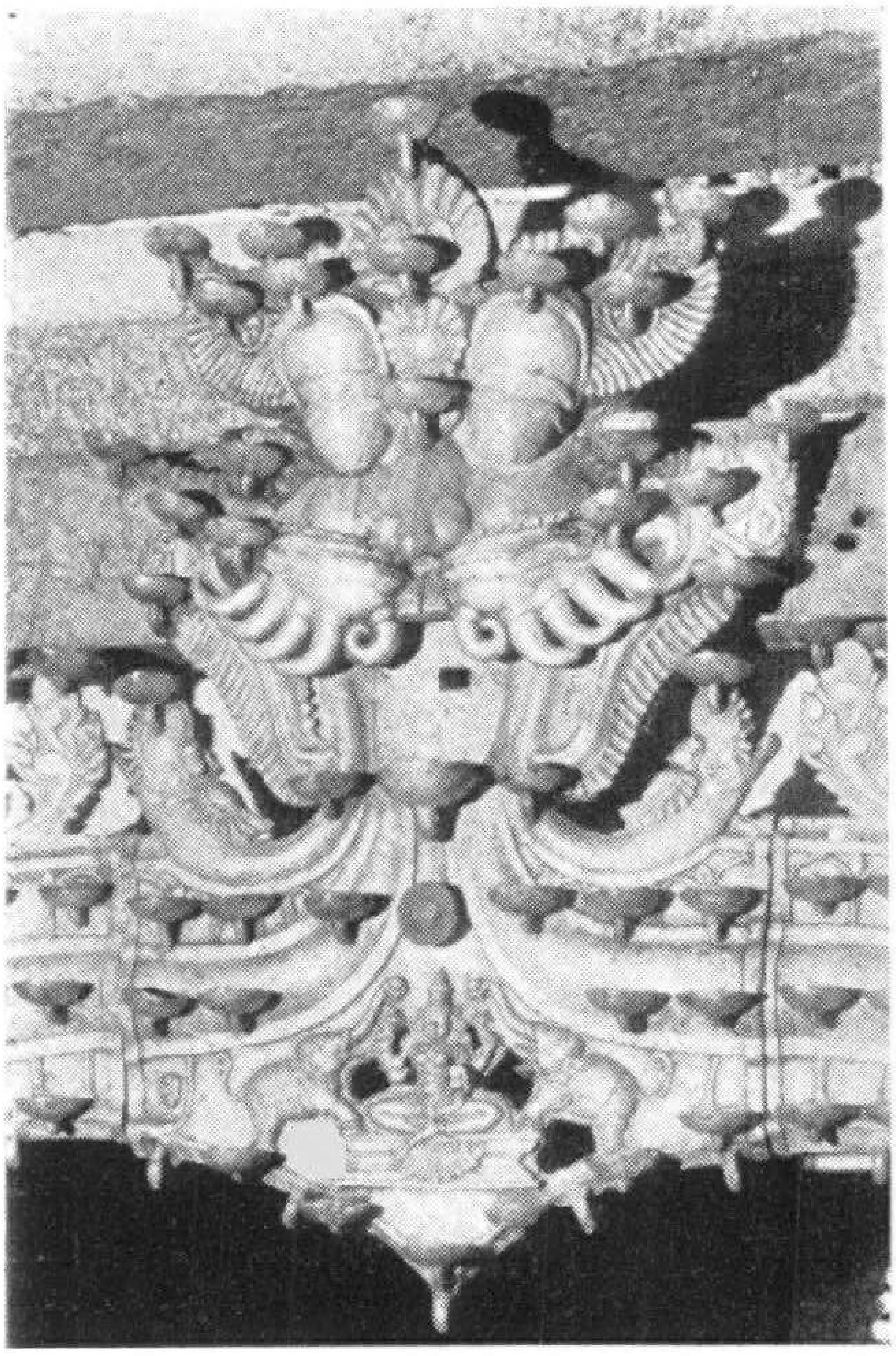
The Krishna temple of the village was built by Krishnappa Nayak, son of Virappa of Madurai Nayak dynasty, towards the end of 16th century. He consecrated the Images Krishna and Rukmini and Satyabhama. In the temple are some fine sculptures resembling the sculptures of Madurai. The Vaidyanatha swamy temple of Madavalam, a suburb of Srivilliputtur is a Siva temple, which has a tall gopuram, similar to the one in the Andal temple. The temple has been in existence earlier to 13th century A.D. Later Pandya records of 13th-14th century refer to royal gifts of lands and villages. The front mandapa carries some late paintings.

The mandapa in front of the Gopura carries paintings on the ceilings. A painting panel depicts the donor. The place where Andal is said to have been found by Periyalvar, is situated in a sobre setting inside a flower garden. It is a thril to be in the place where this divine child was found. Mention must be made of the chaste temple rites and festivals, from morning to the night rites. The Andal festival in the month of Margali enacts the ancient custom of the Goddess taking oil bath etc. a scene never to be missed. Of other points of interest in the temple are the lofty temple tower, considered to be one of the tallest towers in Tamilnadu and also the biggest Charriot.

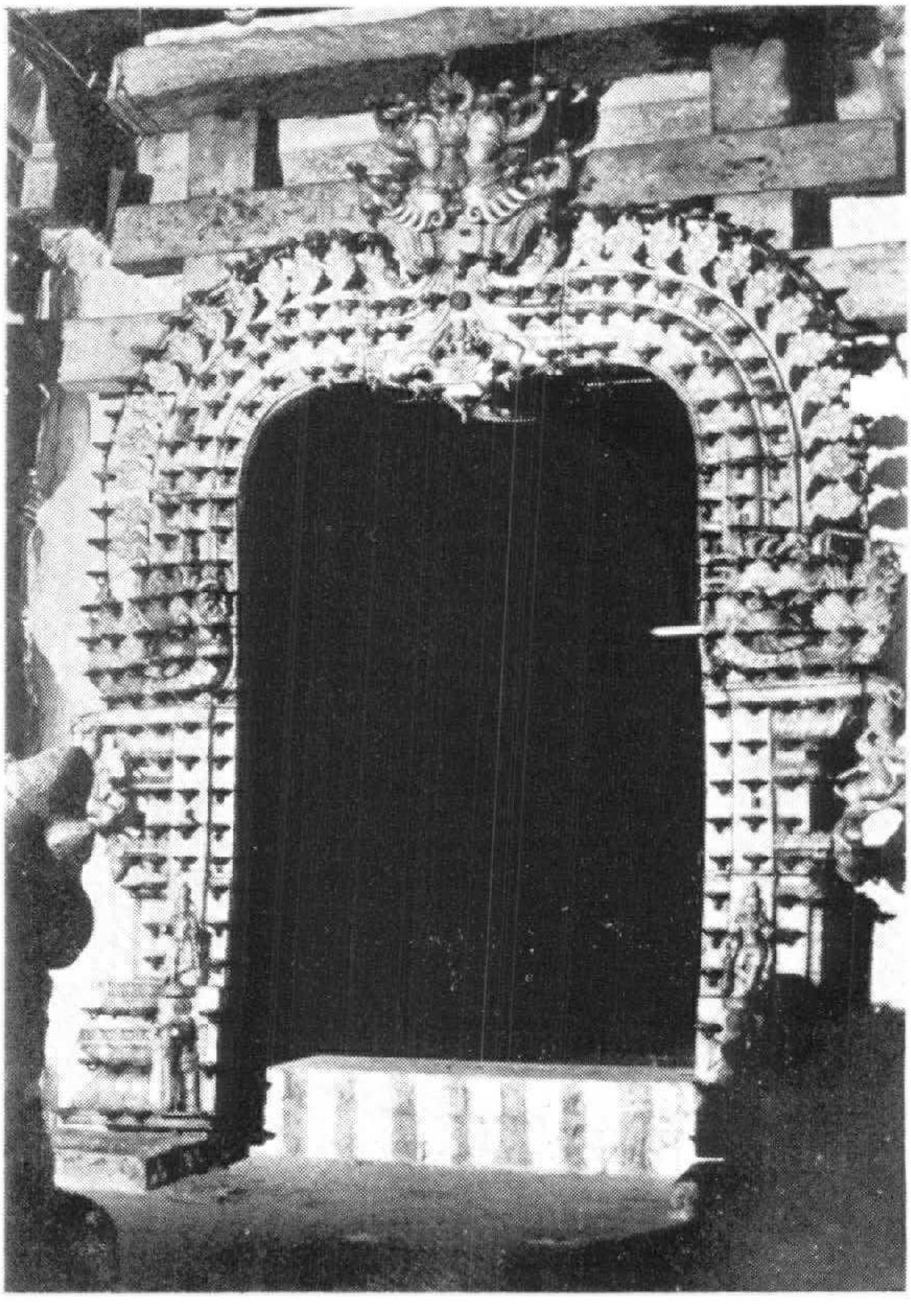
Sakkottai (*Thiruppattur Taluk*)

The ancient name of the village was Saykalur, situated in Perumpunadu. The earliest record in the village is dated in the beginning of 13th century A.D. In the later half of 13th century the village assumed significance. Most of the inscriptions of this village are dated in the reign of Kulasekhara Pandya, The Siva temple in the village was called Virasekhara Iswaram Udaiyar. Obviously named after a king or chief who had the title Virasekhara. In the reign of Kulasekhara, one Kalavayil Nadalvan, fixed the cultivator's share as one-fifth to be paid to the

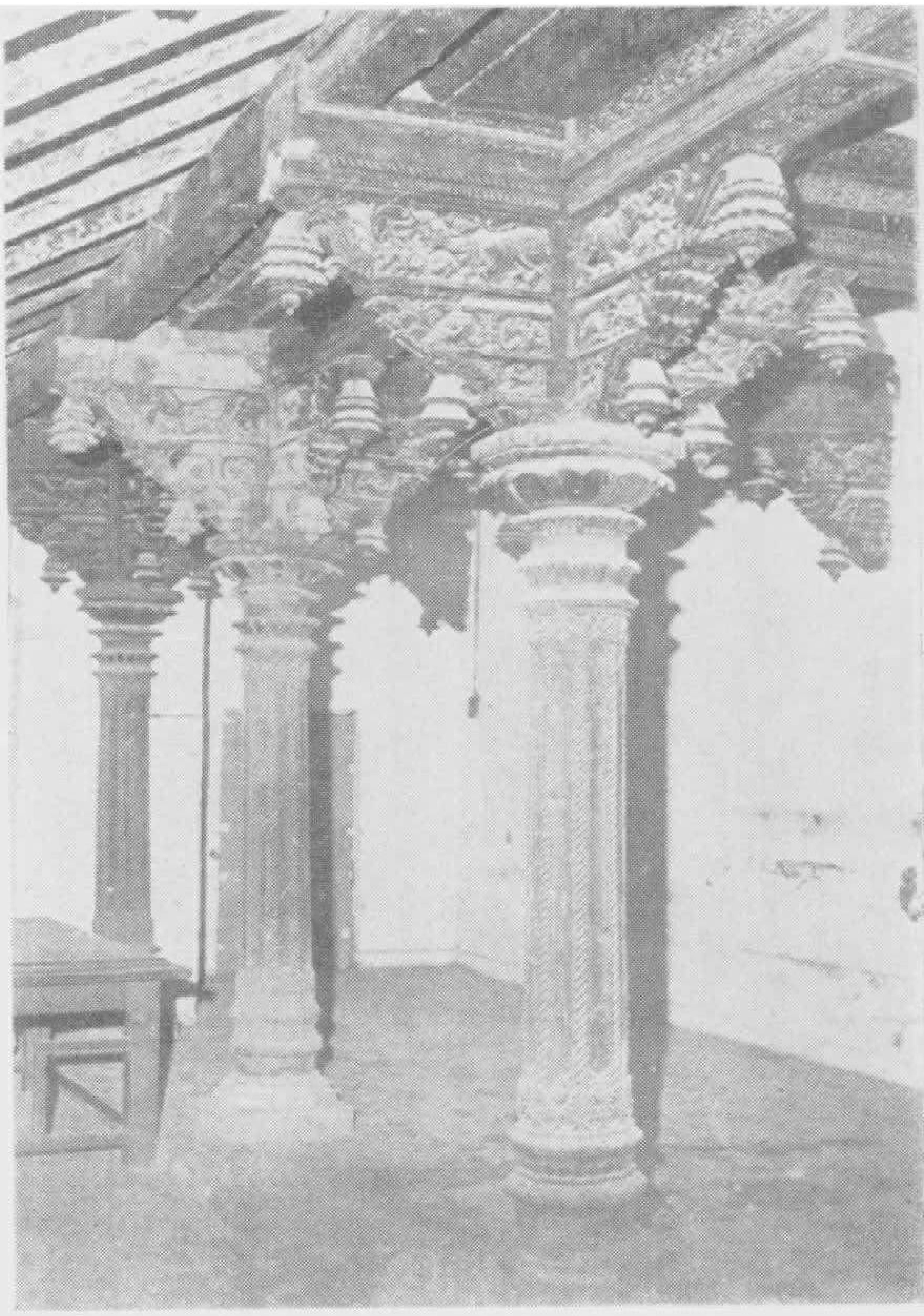
The crown of pearls called Mannar Thiru abishekam in the Vishnu temple at Srivilliputtur.



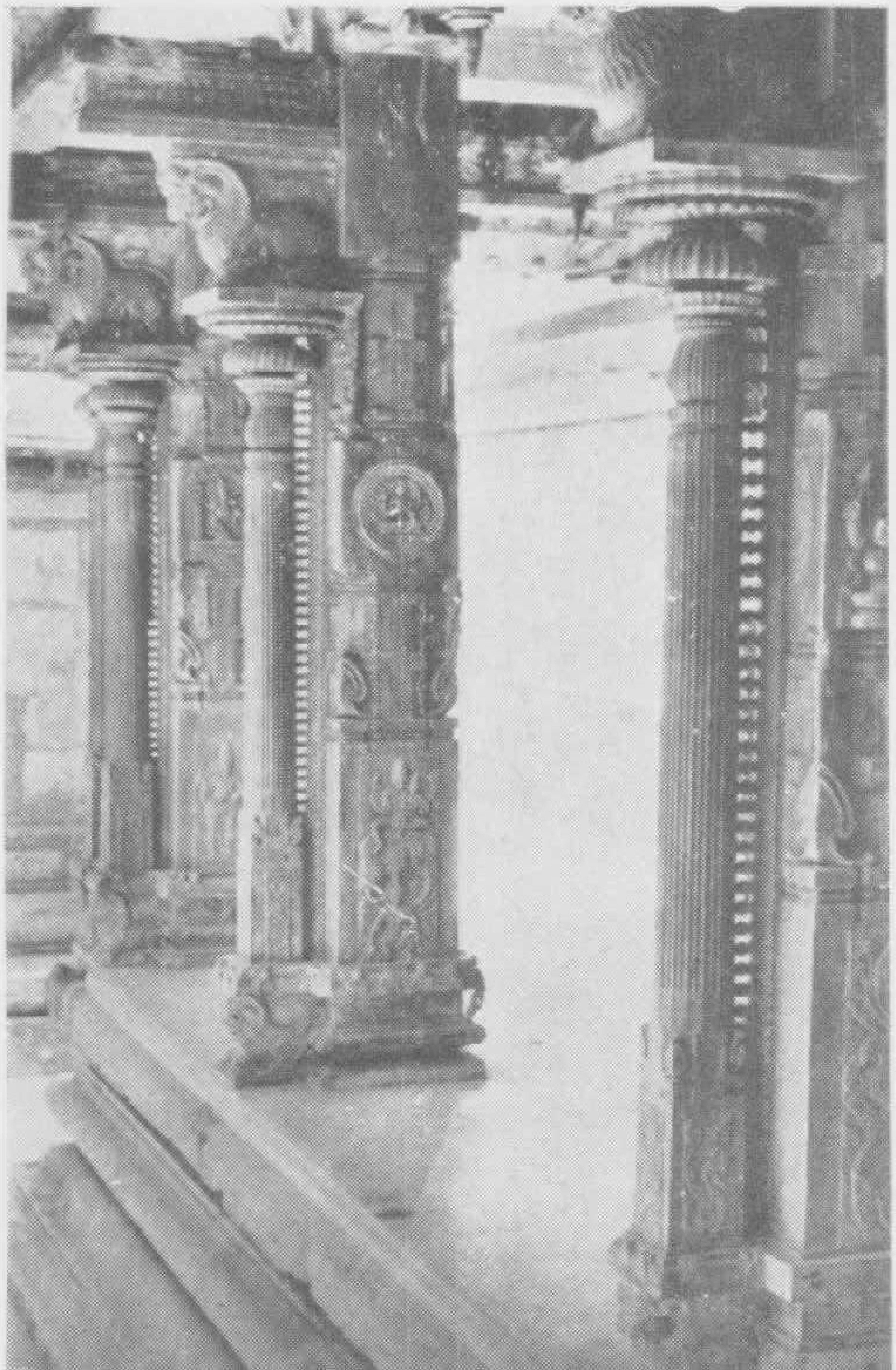
A cast metal work showing Kirtimukha over the ornamental lamp at the entrance of Siva temple—Piranmalai, 18th cent.



The ornamental lamp-cast metal work—Siva temple — Piranmalai, 18th cent.

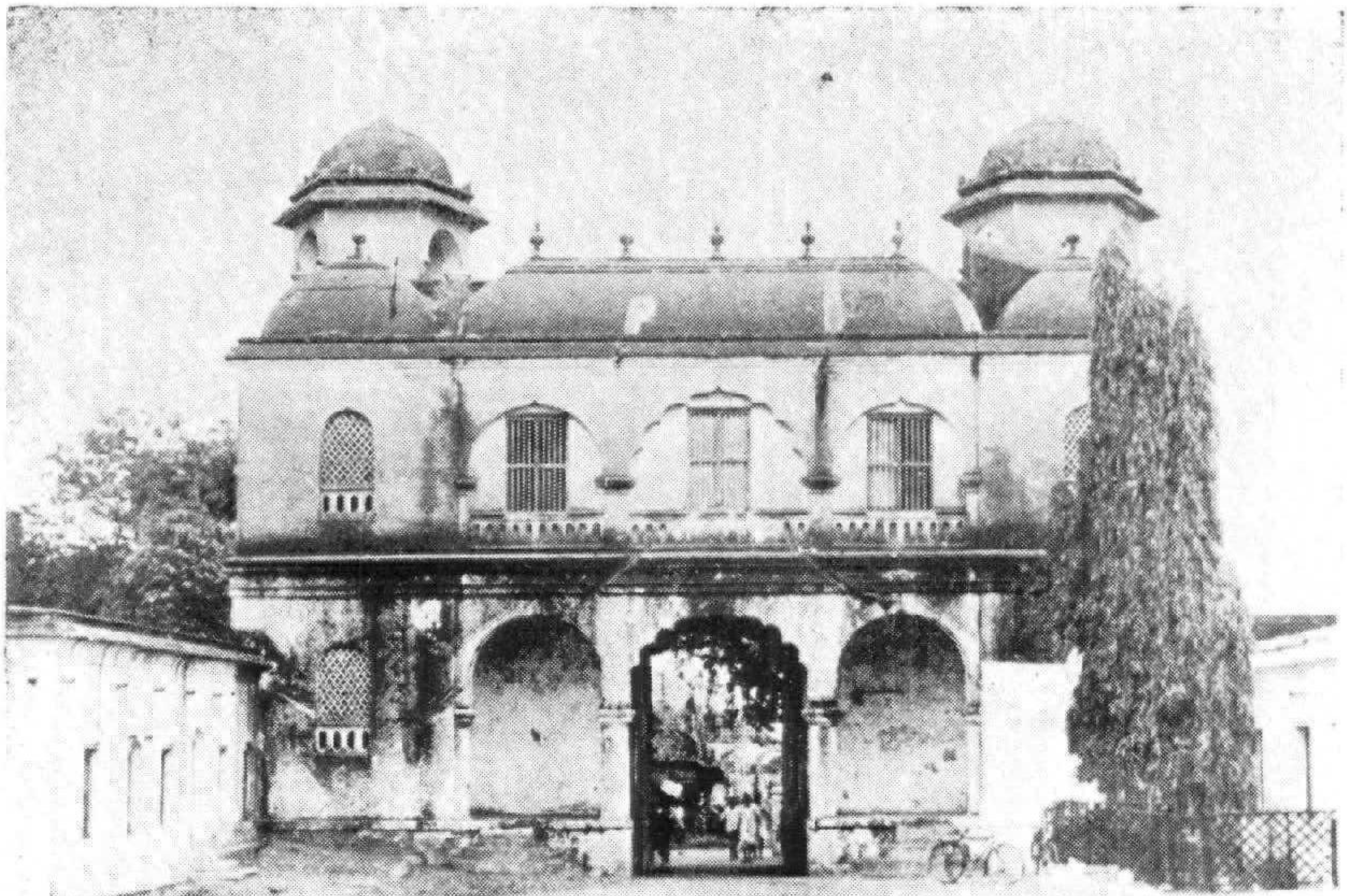


Ornate wooden pillars and beams – Kalyana Mahal Palace-Sivagangai (since destroyed).



Ornate mandapa–Thiruppattu later Pandya 13th cent. A.I

The enterance tower to Ramalinga Vilas,
Ramanathapuram.



The ornamental enterance to the
Sivaganga palace-Sivaganga.

temples of Kalavayil Nayanar, Virasekheram Udaiya Nayanar and Valai Desanayaka Pillaiyar. Obviously these three temples were in proximity in the same temple complex. In the middle of 13th century one Danmarayan instituted special Sandhi worship called Tappilavacakan Sandhi. One Alankara Bhatta set up the deity Vikrama Vijaya Pillaiyār in the temple.

Settur *(Srivilliputhur Taluk)*

The old name of the village was Serrur situated in Anmanadu. Inscriptions of Jatavarman Kulasekhara, Maravarman Kulasekhara, Maravarman Vikrama Pandya, and Dharma-Perumal Kulasekharadeva are found in the village. The Sulochana Isvaramudaiyar temple of the village was known in ancient times as Kannudaiya Isvaram Udaiyar. This temple was in existence from 13th century A.D. The shrine of the goddess, Soundaranayaki, called in the inscription as Kamakkottam Udaiya Alagiya Nacchiyar, was built by Sattan Iravi of Kilkulam in Malaimandalam in 13th century A.D. Serrur was also called then Semmaram and Kulasekharapuram. The name Kulasekharapuram, for Serrur is obviously after Pandya Kulasekhara, of 13th century, who should have established it as a commercial guild. Towards the end of 13th century A.D., Kalainjan Singan alias Tavapperumal, a tapasvin of the place gifted money for burning a twilight lamp in the shrine of the Goddess Alagiya Nacchiyar. Alagan Singan alias Singalarayan of the village, built a matha in the temple for feeding tapasvins and the then ruling king Maravarman Vikrama Pandya, remitted taxes on land endowed by him. In the year 1561 A.D. Prince Alganperumal Ativirarama appointed one Urudaiya Mudali Virapandyan Sudikkodutta Mudali, as the accountant of the temple. This Urudaiya Mudali was in the temple of Thiru Alavayudayar of Madurai (Meenakshi temple.) The inscription records the remuneration pertaining to the temple. The record is interesting as it states that it was the order of the God

himself whose name is given as Dhrishtisvara (sanskrit form of the word Kannudaiya Isvaram). At the beginning the ruling Pandya is mentioned as Dharmaperumal Kulasekharadeva.

Besides this Siva temple, there is a Vishnu temple in the village, now called Srinivasa Perumal. This temple was called in ancient times as Saranarayana Vinnagar Alvar built by Viratam mudittan Perumal in 12th century in the reign Jatavarman Kulasekhara. The ruler Kulasekhara, gifted the village Thiru Aranganeri, tax free for worship and offerings in the temple. The village was left in charge of Nagarakkanakkan by name Pulivalam Udaiyan and his descendants as tenants. The builder of the temple Viratam mudittan Perumal was the brother-in-law of the king. The minister to the king Mantri Raman alias Pallava rajan of Perumanallur in Andanadu, is also mentioned. The ruler gifted, another land, also tax free. The merchant guild of the village (the Nagarattar of Kulasekharapuram) gifted land to this temple in 12th century for daily offerings and worship.

Sivapuri *(Thiruppattur Taluk)*

The earliest record in the village dates back to 1082 A.D. in the reign of the Chola emperor Kulottunga I. The village is a pre 11th century foundation. In the Chola records of 11th & 12th century A.D. the village is called Chola martanda chaturvedi mangalam. (probably after Kulottunga I) situated in Chola Pandya Valanadu. The present Swayamprakasar temple was called "Tantonrisvaram" in ancient times. In 1090, under Kulottunga I, there was a hamlet named Vilupparaiyanallur, part of Chola martanda chaturvedimangalam. Where another Siva temple named "Āiyirattainnurruva Isvaram udaiyar" was receiving worship. In the same period (1112 A.D.), there was another temple called Aiyyan Muppanar udaiyan temple where the village assembly met once and exempted taxes on lands. Around this year, the political condition seemed to be disturbed

as the local chiefs are seen entering into compacts vowing to remain faithful to each other. A certain Kandan Mangala Devan alias Tuvarapativelan vowed to remain faithful to Sundaratolan Kandan alias Rajendra Chola Tuvarapativelan. The former entered into a compact with another chief Rajendra Chola Nishadarayan in the reign of Vikramachola in 1078 A.D. Four years later, Sundan Gangaikondan alias Tuvarapativelan gifted some lands as *udirappatti* (blood-land) to the dependents of some swordsmen (villigal) who died fighting on the field. Obviously towards the end of Kulottunga's reign and early years of Vikrama chola, Pandyas were raising their head and there were fightings here.

In the 13th century A.D. this area has gone over to the Pandya who lost no time in renaming the village as Nrpa-sekhara chaturvedimangalam. In all the later Pandya records of 13, 14th and 15th century this name occurs. Quite late, in 14th century the name Sivapuri occurs for a suberb. A few points of interest are; a merchant of Kodumbalur belonging to Manigraman gifted lands Vensattankudi was called Narppattennayiranallur. One Iravalar Pasupati consecrated a shrine named Pasupatisvaram in the Tantonrisvaram temple. There was another shrine called Tuvarapatisvaram Udaiyar. One Manabharana, a merchant of Ariviyur, set up the images of Kuttadumdevar (Nataraja) and Pirattiyar in the temple and exempted taxes on certain lands in the reign of Parakrama. There was another temple in the villagecalled Abhimuktisvaram Udaiyar Mahadeva at Nrpasekhara chaturvedimangalam. A lady Isanadevi gifted a lamp on behalf of her daughter. In the reign of Virapandya, two dancing girls and a Nattuvan were employed for whom lands were allotted. 15 years later another dancing girl got a house site. In the reign of Kulasekhara, one Kulasekhara piccar, consecrated an image of Muttanayinar Periyadevar, and provided for its worship. It is perhaps a portrait of an elder of the king than a deity. In the reign of the Vijayanagar ruler

Achyutadeva, a land gift is recorded. Nagama Nayaka, the father of Visvanatha Nayak of Madurai (the establisher of Madurai Nayak dynasty) figures in a record. One of his agents makes a gift.

In the south east corner of the second prakara were consecrated the dieties of Thiruvambalesvaram Udaiyar, ponnaraiyar and Kunrandar by one Ambala Perumal in the reign of Vira Pandya. In 1227 A.D. under Maravarman Sundara an image Ganesa (Mūtha Pillayar) was set in the second prakara. In 13th century the Amman shrine was constructed by the father of Kunrandar.

Siruvayal-called Aramanai Siruvayal (*Thiruppattur Taluk*)

The ancient name of the village was Siruvayal. The Siva temple now called Mummudinatheswara was originally known as Mummudicholiswaram Udaiyar. Obviously the temple was built after the name of Rajaraja chola I. Around 1275 A.D. under Virapandya, a lady set up the images of Avudaya Nayanar and his consort and a chief Sivanindakālan Malava Cakravarti; gifted lands for worship. Around 1265 A.D. the chief Sivanindā Kālan Malava Cakravarti, gifted the taxes for worship to the Goddess Thirukkāmakotta Nacchiyar and Kandalvar (Skanda). In the same period, a certain Alivanjādān Panchālvi, set up the images Umaskanda Sahitar and Astra devar and the above chief gifted lands. The chief Kanapperudaiyān Mālava Cakravarti, gifted a land as Gurudakshina, to one Kavirayar Isvara Siva Udaiyar of Sandilya gotra, a native of Kalar of Uttaradesa. This was under Maravarman Sundara 1235 A.D. An image of Pillaiyar Nayanar (Ganesa) was set up by one Venadudaiyan. In 13th century, two individuals, one from Ariviyur and another from Alagapuri, built Subrahmanya temple and consecrated the image of Ilayanāyanar. A little later, the dharmakartas of the temple consecrated the images of Goddesses Devayānaiyār and Vallinācchiyār under Kulasekhara. A noble Adaikkalam Kāttān

provided for reciting '*Thiruppāttu*' (Devaram). Gifts were also made in the reign of Madurai Nayak Virappa in 16th century A.D.

Solapuram *(Srivilliputhur Taluk)*

The old name of the village seems to be Solakulantakapuram. Cholakulantaka was a title of a Virapandya, who won a decisive victory in early 10th century and assumed the title Cholantalai Konda and Cholāntaka. If this village was named after him, its foundation would date back to 10th century A D. The name of the Siva temple of the village was Vikramapandya Isvaram Udaiyar in a 13th century inscription. Evidently it was built in the name of Vikrama Pandya. A Vikramapandya had a joint rule with the Jatavarman Sundara Pandya in the 13th century and this temple was probably built during that period. In the 13th century the present Kalyanamandapa of the temple was built by Pirran Kamban. Its ancient name was Rshbhadeva mandapa. Other pillars of the mandapa give the names of the donors of the respective pillars. One of the pillars was gifted by a certain Puvandevan of Korrangudi. He gifted the pillar as a votive offering on the birth of a son to him. The son was named Tenmolipalan alias Danapalan Udappirappalagiyan. Another pillar was gifted by a Samayamantri Udaiyan periyan of Solakulantakapuram in Anmanadu. Alagaikkon of Nettur, the headman of Sirrambur gave money in the hands of the Sivabrahmana, of the temple of Vikrama Pandisvaramudaiyar, for some service. The inscription recording this is found on the Devanadi river bed of the village.

Thirumalugandan Kottai *(Mudukalattur Taluk)*

This village was called in ancient times Amudagunamangalam and the Siva temple called Munaivilisvaram. In a nearby village called Idaivali, also called Erivirappattinam there was another Siva temple called Vitivitankisvaram. A 13th century record under Kulasekhara refers to feeding Brahmins for

reciting Vedas. A certain Ovadakkuttan is also mentioned in the record. In the same reign, the temple priests gave agreement to the dancing women Thiruaranguvirunda pendugal regarding the emoluments provided for them. In 1227 A.D. one Piranrajan made provisions for the God 'Irukkai Madavarana Pillaiyar' in the temple, Almost at the sametime one Kandyadevan gifted lands for the worship of the goddess called 'Oppilāmulaiyāl'. In 1587 A.D. in the reign of the Madurai Nayak, the village is refferred to as Thiumalugandan Kottai.

Thiruppullani

The temple now called Jagannatha was in ancient times known as Devaccilaiyar temple. Thiruppullani is said to be in Kilcembil nadu. Records from 13th century A.D. are available from the reign of Maravarman Sundara Pandya. In the reign of Kulasekhara, certain Aryacakravarti gifted sheperds. Aryacakravartins played important role in Ceylonese history. Three Aryacakravartins gifted a number of villages to this temple. Their names are:—

1. Deivaccilayan Alagan Aryacakkaravarti.
2. Raman Aryacakravarti uncle of Parakrama Pandya.
3. Merutungan Narayana Cakravarti.

The Vijayanagara ruler Kampana, who brought Tamil country under the control of Vijayanagar, paid personel attention to this temple. Kampana instituted a special worship in his name called Kampana udaiyar sandhi in 1371. Three years later, under his reign the taxes due to the royal treasury were apportioned to the temple by the territorial assembly *Nadu.* The taxes were on all adults above the age of 12 in the following rules.

One panam per Brahmin
one panam per Vellala
One panam per Chetti

One panam per Tapasvi
One panam per Kaikkolas
One panam per other castes
Half a panam per Vellan pillai
Half a panam per Idaiyar
Half a panam per Kanmalas
Half a panam per Sānar

These should be collected or forsebly extracted by Velaikkaras annually and made over to the temple. It is interesting to see taxes levied on individual heads, ofcourse giving concessions to socially and economically backward classes.

In the year 1515, the Bana chief Irandakalam Edutta Sundarattōludaiyan Mabali Banadarayan, instituted a special worship in his name. Three years later, another chief, gifted a village in the name of this Mahabali Bana, who is now called a Nayakar under the Vijayanagar influence. In 1778 a certain Anantalvan erected a number of mandapas in the temple. The mandapas were called:

1. Battar Pillai Vilasa
2. Lakshmi Vilasa
3. Jagannatha Vilasa
4. Puviruntaval Vilasa
5. Jagannatha Gangeya Vilasa

Among the Sethupathis, Kilavan Sethupathi, Kattaiyadeva and Marudu brothers are said to have added to the temple.

Thirukkoshtiyur *(Ramanathapuram Taluk)*

Thirukkoshtiyur is intimately connected with the life of the great Vaishnavite Acharya Ramanuja. It is here Ramanuja is said to have learned at the feet of Thirukkoshtiyur Nambi, the main import of the *ashtakshara mantra.* The Vishnu temple now called Soumya Narayana Perumal is the most imposing

temple, and is the main of the village to this day. Besides religious literature , ancient records from three temples of this village give us a glimpse into the ancient history of the place. The earliest records in the village is dated in the reign of the Pandya emperor Srimara Srivallabha, contemporary of Periyalwar in the 9th century A.D. The Vishnu temple was called Periya Srikoil of Thirukkoshtiyur. A lady of Kannikkudi of Kil Iranymuttam, provided a perpectual lamp. The inscription is written in vatteluttu characters.

A number of pillars in the mandapa in front of the Nacchiyar shrine, carry some early inscriptions. The pillars belonged to the original structure which has undergone renovations and the pillars displaced. In 1120 A.D., a lady gifted cash for burning a lamp in front of the temple of the Lord pleased to rest at Kilai Thirunilai. Evidently the temple was a three storyed structure like the present one even earlier to 1150 A.D. and the main deity at the ground floor was Anantasayi Vishnu. The Thirukkoshtiyur village is said to be in Chola Pandya Valanadu a sub-division of Rajendra Chola Valanadu in the district of Rajarajappandi nadu. The Lord of the ground floor is called Keralasingapperumal (and his consorts) in 12th century A D. for which special worships were provided during midnight, and also on every Krithika of the month of Vrschika.

The temple received great benefactions in the 13th century, in the hands of the later Pandyas. In most of the inscriptions of this century the Lord is called Chokka Narayana Perumal. Evidently the present names Sowmiya Narayana Perumal is a later name. The whole territorial assembly of the region, (called the Nattars of Chola Pandya Valanadu) participated in the maintenance of the temple of Sokkanarayana Perumal, by levying three Panams annually as *nattu viniyogam* and gifted the same to the temple in the reign of Pandya Srivallabha of 13th century This King himself gifted two villages

for arranging a nineday festival in Aippasi (Star Chitrai) his natal star. In 13th century A.D., when Sundara Pandya was ruling, the manager of the temple arranged for the recitation of *Thirumoli* in front of the deity during Margali festival (ten days.) So the assembly *Mulaparushai* ordered the temple authorities to give two prasadams and betal leaves to this manager daily in appreciation of his services. A number of gifts were made in the reign of Virapandya in 13th century A.D. A five days Vasantotsava festival was instituted by one Satagopan, ending with the day of Anusham in the month of Rshabha which was his star. In the same period a land was bought by the temple in the name of Periyalvar. This was sold to a person named Ramanujadasan and he was expected to pay a portion of the produce to the temple. A measuring rod called *Kuditangi* and a grain measure *Desavattai* were in use at that period, A certain Munaiyadaraiyan bought a village from the Nagarattar of Ariviyur and gifted it to the temple in the reign of Kulasekhara. A grain measure called 'Virapandyan' was in use. Ariviyur was called Srivallabhapuram in this inscription.

Thiruppacchetti *(Sivaganga Taluk)*

The antiquity of the village goes earlier than 13th century A.D. The earliest record in the village goes to the reign of Maravarman Sundara Pandya beginning of 13th century. The ancient name of the village was Thiruppacchorri, in Madurodaya Valanadu. There were many temples in the temple at the time. The temples mentioned are Thiruppacchorri Udaiyar, Thiruvenkata Vinnagar Alvar, Aiyanar-Kulir Kāvudaiyar, Tadisvaram Udaiyar and Pidariyar. Sundara Pandya exempted taxes on certain lands gifted to these temples. The existing Perumal temple in the village was called Malaimandala Vinnagar Alvar in 13th century A.D. Probably there were two Vishnu temples, one called Thiruvenkatanatha Vinnagar and the other Malaimandala Vinnagar Alvar. In the reign of Vikrama Pandya, a Kannadiga Brahmin, instituted

a service and gifted land to the present Perumal temple. Towards the end of 13th century A.D., the village became depopulated and the King Kulasekhara, settled 40 families of Brahmins. The cause for the depopulation is not known.

In 1550 A.D., Thiruppacchorri was renamed Sadasiva-devarayapuram after the name of the ruling Vijayanagara emperor. Rama Raja Vittaladeva granted it to a Saiva Priest Sarvesvara Gurukkal. But they were ordered not to collect taxes from pilgrims visiting Lakshmana Tirtha at Ramesvaram. There was a grant for maintaining Vedic students in 13th century A.D.

Thirumalai *(Sivaganga Taluk)*

Thirumalai in the district is of great archaeological interest on account of a rock cut cave of the early Pandya of 18th century. The cave has a scroped out sanctum and a front mandapa. The sanctum carries an image of Uma Mahesvara plastered and painted in 18th century A.D. Flanking the entrance are dwarfs carved one on either side. In the side wall of the front mandapa, is carved a sculpture of Subrahmanya, standing with two arms. He wears a long garland and a rudrakshamala running over the right arm. To his right is shown a dwarf and a cock on a standard. To his left is an attendent standing. An umbrella is shown above Subrahmanya. Below are shown a ram and peacock and a vase with flowers. The whole cave temple seems to have been painted in the beginning of 18th century. Inside the sanctum are devotees painted on the side walls. Later additional structures have been added outside which includes another Siva shrine. In 1233 A.D., there existed a hall called Ainnurruvan Thirukkavanam in the temple where the Assembly met and remitted taxes on several articles of merchantise to the temple. In the same century, the oil merchants named Dhanmadavalar, residing at Pancavanmadevi perumteru, agreed to supply one spoon of oil per oil mill

daily, for burning a lamp. Towards the end of 16th century under Vikrama Pandya, an image of "Thirucchirrambala Pillaiyar" was set up. A dancing girl named Thiruvenkāttu Nangai, built a verandah.

A number of inscriptions are found on the walls and pillars of this shrine. The epigraphs refers to two temples Kunrattu Nayanar, and Thirumalai Perumal refering to these two temples. The second structural shrine of Siva, seems to have come into existence before 13th century. In 1227 A.D., under Maravarman Sundara, lands were bought and endowed for the worship of the Goddess. At that period, the coins named *Soliyanar palamkasu*, and *Vira pancanam Kasu* were in circulation. Another dancing girl Thirugnanasambanda nangai set up the image of Āludai Pillaiyar (Sambandar) in the temple and gifted lands for worship. Two brothers of Manappadai vidu set up the images Pillaiyar Nayanar and Thiruvadavur Nayanar under Parakrama Pandya.

Besides the Siva temple there is a natural rock cavern at the other side of the hill which was used as an abode by Jaina ascetics in the beginning of the Christian era. There are rock beds to indicate the same.

Thiruppalaikkudi *(Thiruvadanai Taluk)*

The village dates back to 13th century A.D , and was called Thiruppalaikkudi. A certain Ambisoran alias Manickavachakan of Marudur set up an image of Aludai pillaiyar at Thiruppalaikkudi. In 13th century the name of the god now called Mantharanathaswami, seems to hav been Abhimanarama. Three inscriptions of Kulasekhara (13th century A.D.) are found in the village, but the temple seems to have undergone renovation and is not in original condition.

The village Marudur was also called Manabharana Pattinam, named evidently after the Pandya Manabharana in 10th century A.D.

Thiruppattur *(Thiruppattur Taluk)*

This is an ancient village occupying an important place in the history of Early Pandyan art. The Thiruttalinatha temple in the village, is one of the very few early Pandya structural temples preserved to this day. The ancient name of the village was Thirupputtur said to be a Brahmadeya in Koluvurkurram. Latter in 12th century A.D., the territorial division was called Keralasinga Valanadu. Beginning from 9th century A.D., the temple has been enlarged by new additions during the Chola occupation and when the later Pandyas established their power. There are two fine mandapas of 14th century, illustrative of later Pandya architecture in fine forms. The earliest and most important inscription is that of a Chief Tennavan Pallavarayan alias Maran Accan of Poliyur. He gifted money for lamps and also flower garlands. Many Chieftains of great fame took keen interest in the Thiruttalinatha temple. A certain Maravan Anukkapperarayan gifted coins for a lamp in 9th century. The celebrated Naraloka Vira who had the title Manavir kuttan Kalingaraya and who served under the Chola Kulottunga, built a mandapa here and arranged for a special worship in his name. This Chief has made many additions to Chidambaram and Thiruvadigai temples. A mahamatra, Periyalvan is referred to in the records. A Chief Rajendra Chola Keralan, Nishadarāja figures in other records of 12th century A.D. The Ganga Chief, Kandan Uyyavandan alias Gangeya has made many gifts in this region in 13th century A.D. Other references of importance are Perumparra Puliyur Nambi, Marai Jnanasambandar, Visvanatha Nayak and Tumbicci Nayak. One Vijayalayadevan of Suraikkudi drove away the Muslims, re-established worship the temple. The main diety is called Thirukkarrali Pidārar. The Goddess is called in ancient records as Kamakkottam Udaiya Nachiyar. Besides

there seems to have been two more Siva shrines Agastisvaram and Kailasam Udaiyar in the proximity. In the reign of Jatavarman Kulasekhara, the image of Nataraja (called Kuttādum Devar) is mentioned. The Bhairava was under worship prominently from 12th century A.D. A little later under Virapandya one Mannar Kudaiyan set up the images of Thiru Ambala perumal, Dakshinamurti, and Thiruvadavur Nayanar. A dancing girl set up the image of Thirunavukkarasar. A sculpture of great interest is the Suladevar of the later Pandya period of 13th century A.D.

Two Vishnu temples of the village are referred to. The earlier one was named Jalasayana Perumal and the later one the Jayamkonda Chola Vinnagar Alvar. The later one came into existence after Rajaraja I in 11th century A.D. A point of emotional attachment for the people of Ramnad district is the heroic demise of the Marudu brothers at this place, when they were hanged in 1801 A.D. by the British. Their cemetries are still preserved in the village.

Thiruttangal *(Sattur Taluk)*

Thiruttangal is an ancient settlement, over 2000 years old, well-known for its Vishnu temple-Ninra Narayana Perumal on the hill. The village was called Thiruttangal from the sangam times. 13th century inscriptions, refer to Lord Vishnu of the place as the paramaswami, pleased to stand on the sacred hill at Thiruttangal. The village is said to be devadana in Karunilakkudi Nadu. The lake in the village was called Devendra Vallabha Pereri in mediaeval records. A measuring rod called, *Kunrakkal-Pāraikkol* was in use in the village in 13th century under Maravarman Kulasekhara, in whose reign a shrine to Narasimha (Singa Perumal) was erected with a mandapa (called Thiruvenkatadevan Mandapa) was built on the western and Northern prakara of the temple by two

brothers, Sons of Thiruvarangadevan. The same brothers gifted lands for reading the Mahābharata, the Ramayana and the Puranas, in a matha built by them in the year 1220 A.D. Special worships were instituted in the temple in the name of Sundara pandya *(Sundarapandyan Sandhi)* and Kurukulattaraiyan, a chief. In 1227 A.D., this Kurukulattaraiyan a Minister to Sundara Pandya. built the Garbhagraha, Ardhamandapa and Maha mandapa of the temple. A chola inscription of about 1032 A.D., refers to the deity as Thiruvenkata nilai Perumanadigal. In the reign of Jatavarman Kulasekhara, one lady Thirumangai Andal set up the images of *Karmarchanai-Emperumān* and his consorts. In 1142 A.D., under Kulottunga, a rock has to be blasted and the inscription on it was recopied. The record relates to the procession of the image on an amavasya days. The Sri Jayanthi was celebrated on 1224 A.D. An interesting inscription states that the villagers of Sadaiyan Kuruchi, deserted the village due to oppression, and that an assurance was given to them that they would not suffer any troubles and were resettled. There are a number of later Pandya inscriptions on the temple walls indicating its prosperity.

On the same rock there is a Siva temple now called Karunilanatha Swami temple. It was built in 1233 A.D. in the reign of Maravarman Sundara Pandya, by his minister, the Chief Kuru Kulattaraiyan. A late inscriptions, refers to the deity as Karunilanatha Swami and Goddess Minakshi. A point of interest is the figüre of a soldier Ulli Bomman Kalangāda Kanda Nayakar who died probably in a raid. The soldier whose figure is carved on the rock is seen cuting the head of a horse with a warrior. He is said to be a follower of Varatunga Rama Tanippuli Kalangata Kanda Nayakkar. As a token of his sacrifice, the Thiruttangal territory (Sirmai) was gifted to him as *Rattakkani* (gift for blood shed). A boulder on the other side of the village is marked as a boundary stone.

TAMIL NADU STATE DEPARTMENT LIBRARY, MADRAS

Thiruppuvanam *(Sivaganga Taluk)*

Situated about 12 miles south-east of Madurai, this is an important ancient Saivaite centre.

This place is famous for its Poovannanathaswamy temple. It is one of the 14 sacred Pandya temples, and must have been in existence before 7th century, as Thirugnanasambandar has visited this temple. One Kandaswamy Pulavar of 1543 A.D. has written a sthalapuranam of this place. The temple is situated on the southern bank of Vaigai. The temple is 400 feet long east to west and 327 feet broad north to south. It has a high outer wall. At the the entrance of the temple, life like stone statutes of Tirumalai Nayak and his consort Vallabha, Siddhar, Tirumal Nayak's pradhani, Chokkappa Nayakar, and Ponnanaiyal the devoted dancig girl, are seen. There is a massive wooden car for the temple.

In front of the temple there is the unfinished tower called Raya Gopuram which Tirumala Nayaka began but could not complete. It is said that he began as many as 64 other Mandapams simultaneously and many of them remain incomplete.

Adjacent to the Raya Gopuram is the Mandapam of Ponnanaiyal. Adjacent to this Mandapam is Tirumalai Nayak's Mahal. It is similar in design to other mahals in that there is a vaulted dome on the four walls of the buildings. This appears to have been constructed to provide himself with the halting place. Only a portion of the Mahal remains. In front of it there is the bell mandapam. There are four theerthams (holy waters) in the temple. The chief festival is held in Panguni (March-April) for ten days. The temple contains many stone inscriptions and copper plate charters. King Seraman Perumal has visited this place. Saints Thirujnana Sambandar, Thirunavukarasu Nayanar, Sundaramurthy Nayanar Karuvurdevar have sung Tamil hymns in praise of this temple.

Thiruchuli (*Aruppukkottai Taluk*)

Thiruchuli is an ancient settlement with an important Siva temple, considered sacred among the 14 temples of the Pandya region. Few early Pandya sculptures assignable to 8th century A.D. are found in the premises of the temple suggesting great cultural activity under the Pandyas in the 8-9th centuries A.D. A seated image of Vishnu and two stone sculptures of Sri Devi and Budevi are of excellant early Pandyan workmenship and are housed in the prakara of the temple. The temple was under the control of the Cholas and have received gifts of lands etc; in the time of Rajaraja Chola. Muthuramalinga Sethupathy of Ramanathapuram is said to have carried out extensive renovations and repairs. It is the birth place of Bhagvan Ramana Maharishi.

Not far away from the village, is a small rocky bolder with an ancient rock cut cave, a work of the early Pandyas.

Thirukkalakkudi (*Thiruppattur Taluk*)

The ancient name of the village is Thirukkolakkudi where there is an ancient excavated cave temple with sculptures assignable to 8-9th century A.D.

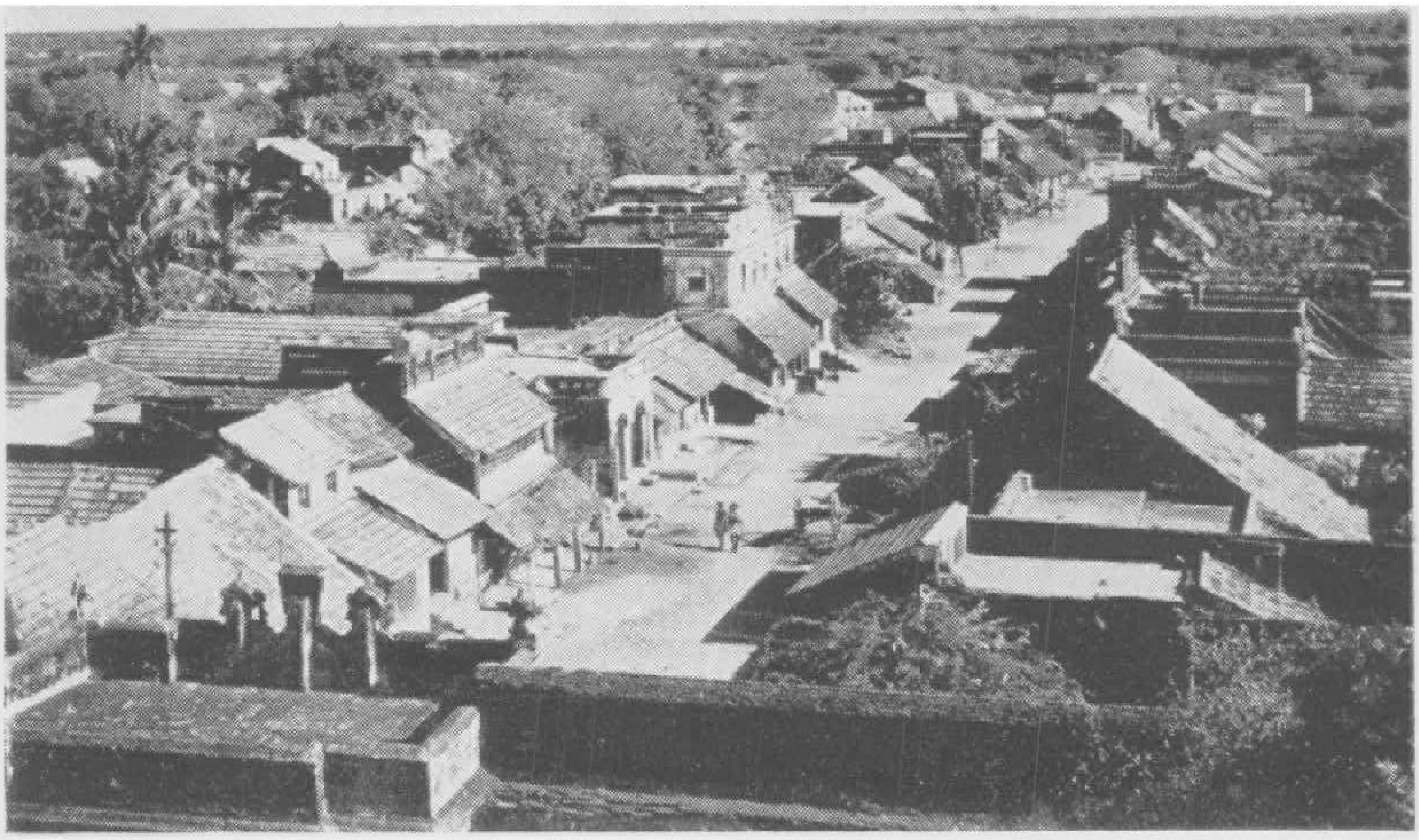
Tondi (*Thiruvadanai Taluk*)

(During the *Sangam* age Tondi was known as Chola Tondi. It is different from the Tondi on the west coast now called Quilandy, a European corruption of the alternative term Kadal Tondi (*Kadal* means Sea) and known in ancient times as Porayan Tondi or Cheran Tondi. Tondi was among the places held by Lankapura Dandanayaka during the brief Ceylonese occupation of the Ramanathapuram country in the later period of the twelfth century. According to the Chola account Kulasekhara sought for and obtained the help of the Chola King Rajadhiraja II who sent his army under Sambuvarayan, and this

Kalaiyar Koil — Gopuras

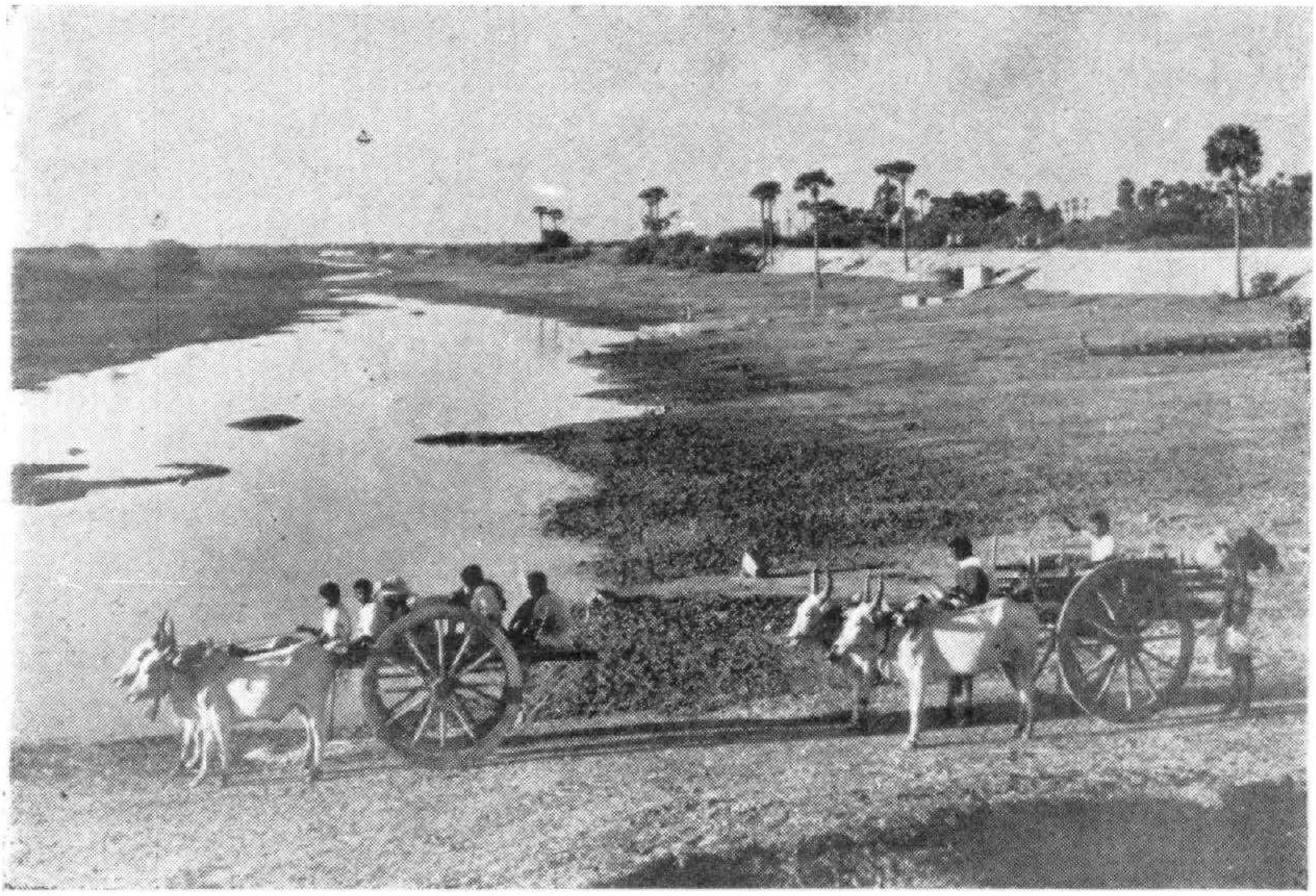
Wood carvings on a temple chariot - Kalaiyar Koil

The impressive corridor of Ramesvaram



The street overlooking Thirukkoshtiyur temple, from where Ramanuja preached the Narayanamantra to people of all castes.

Agni thirtham—North Indian Sankalpa.



The Rajasingamangalam Tank-excavated by the early Pandya ruler-Rajasimha-10th cent. A.D still under use.

Chola general fought and defeated Langapura and Tondi was the scene of some fighting'.

Uttarakosamangai *(Ramanathapuram Taluk)*

This village is closely associated with the name of Saivite saint Manickavachakar who is said to have studied under Lord Siva here. The temple has received benefactions in the hands of the Sethupathi rulers. But earlier in the reign of later Pandyas in the 13th century, gifts were made. In 1433 A D., Maravarman Virapandya gifted lands to the temple. He is obviously the Tiruneveli Pandya who had the title Kaliyugarama and Tirunelveli Perumal. In the year 1583 the Thanjavur Nayak ruler, Achyutappa, son of Sevvappa, made some gifts at Ramasethu and a village in the Chola country to the temple of Thiru Uttarakosamangai. Uttarakosamangai is said to be in Sri Desam, a subdivision of Sembinadu. The Madurai Nayak Muthuveerappa gifted some lands for celebrating festivals in the temple in the year 1608. The temple was provided with two gopuras, but one of them, remains unfinished. In the Mandapa in front of the Nataraja shrine paintings of late 18th century, depicting dancers and other scenes together with marriage of goddess Parvathi with Lord Siva are depicted. These paintings are in a somewhat different tradition than the one found in Ramalinga Vilas palace of Ramnad

Vairavanpatti *(Thiruppattur Taluk)*

This is an ancient foundation, dating earlier than 11th century A.D. The ancient name of the village is not known. The Bhairava temple was under regular worship and the main deity was called Thirumayana deva. Inscriptions referring to this deity are found in Vatteluttu script. It seems that the original structure has undergone renovation. The inscribed slabs are in fragments. In the reign of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya in 13th century A.D., certain new images were consecrated in the temple and lands were purchased and gifted for wor-

ship. The currency, then prevelant was called *Choliya-nar-palangasu.*

Vadakku Venganallur *(Srivilliputhur Taluk)*

This village was gifted as a Brahmadeya to a Brahmin Sri Ramabhatta Somayaji; son of Kuruvi Bhatta Narayana Atiratrayaji by the Pandya King Maravarman Sundara Pandya I, in the 13th century. The gift was made at the request of the King's brother-in-law Alagapperumal. This Ramabhatta son of Narayanabatta built a Vishnu temple Cheranarayana Vinnagar Alvar, in Cheranarayana mangalam named after his father. He also arranged for the worship of the deities. The measures "Mudal irrapandya" and "Sundara-Pandyangol" measuring 24 feet are also mentioned. The inscriptions referring to these facts are found in the Chidambaresvara temple in the village. This Siva temple of Chidambaresvara, seems to have been built in the beginning of 16th century. In 1562 A.D. a land was gifted as Abhisheka Kattalai for God Chidambaresvara by the Pandya Thirunelvelipperumal alias Dharmaperumal.

Vallam *(Paramakkudi Taluk)*

This village seems to have been an ancient foundation. A temple named Thirunagesvaramudaiya Nayanar of Perumarudur is mentioned in an inscription of the village. The inscription is dated in the reign of the Pandya ruler Jatavarman Parakrama Pandya in the 15th century.

Vadavanpatti *(Sivaganga Taluk)*

The ancient name of the village was Malaiyarayan Kudi alias Kadambangudi. The Umamahesvara temple in the village was called Periya Udaiya Nayanar in 13th century. A person Virapperumal built certain portions of the temple in the year Nandana. The village Niyamam nearly was called Kulasekhara madigai a commercial settlement. In the 13th

century a physician from Alagaimanagar held a land here. Additions were made to the temple mandapa by one Ilangai vali tirandan. Another Siva temple Jayamkonda Cholesvaram Udaiyar was in existence in 13th century A.D. A Ganesa image called Desinayaka pillaiyar was in the temple under worship.

Veppilaipatti *(Sathur Taluk)*

In the reign of Srivallabha in 13th century certain Uruni Araiyan Madhurantakan alias Karunilakkudi Nadalvan of Irunjolanadu, built a dam. The fact is recorded in a granite pillar lying in front of the Gangaiyamman Koil. This Chieftain, comes from a family which has taken keen interest in irrigation work in the area. An ancestor of his; Naranan Sattan alias Karunilakkudi Nadalvan, repaired the stone sluices in Alangudi and Iruppaikkudi in the reign of the Chola Kulottunga in the year 1100 A.D.

Villippanur *(Srivilliputhur Taluk)*

The Sundarapperumal temple is a 13th century foundation. It was called Sundarattol vinnagar in ancient times. A certain Alagan Uyyavandan alias Nandipanmar of Vilattur set up the Utsava images of God Alagapperumal and his consorts in 13th century and arranged for their worship and offerings. In the next year, the king himself gifted the income from the taxes of Kuvani village for offerings to the Goddess. The village was a Kani of Nandipanmar who renamed it as Satagopa Vilagam.

Villippanur was called in ancient times Tennavan Ponparri Vilupparaiyanallur. A minister to the Pandya ruler Maravarman Sundarapandya whose name is given Amaiccan Vandhirayan also known as Arulalan Sevakattevan, of Taccanur instituted a special worship in the temple Amaccanarayanan sandhi for God Alagapperumal, his consorts and Singapperumal. Thus this Vishnu temple attracted the attention of the Pandya king and Maravarman and his ministers.

HISTORIC INSCRIPTION AT POOLANKURUCHI

The Tamilnadu State Department of Archaeology has discovered a sensational ancient Tamil inscription engraved on a rocky face of a hillock in Poolankuruchi village near Ponnamaravathi in Thiruppathur Taluk, Ramnad District. The inscription running over 15m. in length and about 3m. in height is written in Tamil Brahmi script assignable to around 300 A.D. This is the longest and most outstanding inscription of ancient Tamilnadu discovered so far and throws very valuable light on what was hitherto known as the dark age in the history of Tamilnadu. The inscription is dated in the reign of a king Kūran, son of Senthan. The record is important in many ways.

1. The inscription is clearly pre-pallava in date and Post-Sangam period and is therefore of vital interest to the ancient history of Tamilnadu.

2. The King Koorran is known for the first time and is sure to pose interesting problems regarding his identity.

3. His date is recorded in an era (The record is dated in the year 182 (?) and days 36). If the era mentioned is the Saka era, then the date of the inscription would be about 260 A.D. which is also supported by the Paleography of the script.

4. The record is the ancient most inscription in Tamil country to furnish astronomical date like Paksha, Masa, day etc.

5. It gives astonishing details about early territorial divisions of ancient Tamilnadu like Pandinadu, Venadu, Konganadu, Muthurru Koorram, Avarru Koorram, Devakula Koorram, Ayivuvala Koorram and Senthan Kottam. The record also shows that there was a thoroughly spread out net work of administrative machinery even in such an early period; department of Agriculture, Revenue, Judicial Officers. Chieftains controlling various endowment villages like Brahmadayas are seen participating in this transaction. The record also refers to the confirment of Chieftaincy on certain individuals over Pandinadu and Konganadu.

6.* The record is an outstanding deed relating to the sale of land and the method in which the sale deeds were drafted in early Tamil country. Among members referred to a certain Ambar Kilan figures prominently.

Due to continuous exposure to heat and radiation and ain the inscription is unfortunately worn out at some places lepriving us of a full import of the record. The inscription is lmost invisible to the nacked eye. The epigraph was dis-overed by Thiru. D. Thulasiraman, Archaeological Officer of ne Tamilnadu State Department of Archaeology, Tiruchi District.

The record relates to a deed draft issued by one Nariyan Kāri of Venadu attested by a number of Chieftains and fficials of the region. The way in which the Chieftaincy is onferred over Pandinadu and Kongunadu shows that the ruler Kūrran was a very powerful ruler around 300 A.D. A number of Brahmadaya villages are referred to and a heirarchy of dministration officials including those protecting the internal ecurity and external defence are mentioned in addition to nany wet and dry lands and tank irrigation. Perhaps in the vhole history of India this is the earliest record after the edict of Asoka to detail in an accurate manner various aspects of ife found in any regional language.

The Tamilnadu State Department of Archaeology has aken it up for protection under the Ancient Monuments Act.

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